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WHY AM I

A PRESBYTERIAN?

OR

A VINDICATION OF CHURCH ORDER, DOCTRINE, AND PRACTICAL HOLINESS

AS ENJOINED

IN THAT PORTION OF CHRIST'S HERITAGE.

IN THREE PARTS.

SMITHSONIAN 2374 INSTITUTION

BY A MOTHER.

N. W. Campbell.

It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints.—JUDE 3.

Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.—JER. vi. 16.

PHILADELPHIA:

WILLIAM S. MARTIEN.

1852.

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PREFACE.

It is nearly two years since the first part of this little work was presented for publication. The partial testimony of that kind friend, whose introduction gave the proudest sanction to my book, was doubtless all-important to its success. Encouraged by the favourable reception given, the second appeared in the latter part of the same year; and the third having also been issued, the whole is now presented to the public, complete in one volume.

Neither time nor labour has been spared in the search of authorities, nor in the examination of the Scriptures; and, in every case, words or ideas have been made use of that seemed appropriate, wherever they were to be found.

I cannot apologize for the preference avowed for the Order, Doctrine, and Practical Holiness inculcated in that branch of the Church which received my youthful selection, and with which I have been connected for six and thirty years. While charity and forbearance are so much in vogue, it will be permitted to me, the more readily, to avouch my prede-

liction for the Presbyterian name. For the favour accorded to my little book, my grateful acknowledgments are due; and, if either in doctrine or practice, in church order or in Christian character, the cause I advocate shall be in the least promoted, my humble efforts will be well rewarded. More especially would I request, that those who bear the name and exercise the important office of a mother, would not neglect the different branches of instruction which the subjects here discussed present to their attention. How great is their responsibility! how rich the reward belonging to the right discharge of their sacred trust! Let every Presbyterian mother resolve, in the strength of her Master, to bring up her children as such; and not as worldlings, butterflies of fashion, or aspirants for wealth and earthly honours. Let sound doctrine, that cannot be condemned; strict morality, in the gospel sense of the term; consecration of heart and substance; the practice of prayer with your children—attest the fidelity of professions witnessed by many a communion season, and often reiterated, perhaps, in times of sorrow or of suffering.

Then shall many a child of the Church realize the value of its birthright, grow up in holiness and knowledge, and be able to answer the inquiry, *Why am I a Presbyterian?*

N. W. CAMPBELL.

Maple Grove, October, 1852.

THE AUTHOR TO HER BOOK.

Go FORTH! go forth! my little book,
Forth to the world of men;
God's gracious sanction I invoke
On all the truths that thou hast spoke—
His blessing on my pen!

In midst of grief's o'erwhelming storm,
My solace thou hast been;
It soothed my anxious heart, to form
Thy characters, with interest warm,
And sketch each simple scene.

By shaded walk and gay parterre,
Thy pages have been wrought;
Where Nature points the worshipper
To that great Power which fashioned her,
In joyous, grateful thought.

The strength of Zion's gates to tell,
The wisdom of her laws,
To state the doctrines loved so well,
To picture heaven, to warn from hell,
And urge the Saviour's cause;

To paint the beauties of his face,
To speak his wondrous love,
And through prophetic Scripture trace
The unfolding glories of *His* grace,
Who pleads for us above;

To show the Eternal Spirit's might,
The Godhead's awful throne;—
These are the themes of my delight,
Though all advent'rous is my flight,
Daring that Empyrean height,
To angels better known.

Might thou, my little book, be made
The means, one soul to bring,
A willing thrall, to Him who paid
Our ransom, when he groaned and bled—
Our Prophet, Priest, and King;

Such trophy would seem more to me
And dearer to my heart,
Than mines of golden ore could be,
Or fame's entrancing extasy,
Didst thou these boons impart!

But most of all, my thought ascends
For mine own flesh and blood—
My children, relatives, and friends,
For them the supplicant lowliest bends,
That they might serve their God.

And these glad groups that round me play
In childhood's sunniest hour,
My children's children:—O! that they
Might early tread the narrow way
And feel religion's power.

Then forth! then forth! my little book,
Forth to the world of men;
God's gracious sanction I invoke,
On all the truths that thou hast spoke—
His blessing on my pen!

INTRODUCTION.

An effective calumny against our Presbyterian polity and doctrine is to say they are rigid and austere. And it may be, that a continual reproach of this kind has endeared to some intelligent Presbyterians a sort of stiff, severe, and formal inculcation of the precious truth, which has been held in every age, at the cost of much malediction. This fault is of more and more injurious consequence. Now, when secular instruction of every kind is made attractive, by familiar and sprightly illustration; when history itself unbends a stately form to the charms of dramatic life and variety; and, above all,

when the hoary superstitions of Popery, as well as every other form of error and fanaticism, put on the lively fascinations of story and romance, we are culpable for the neglect of any kind of innocent literature, which might engage the young with similar captivation. Especially, when so much that is thrilling may be found in our traditions; so much that is free, expansive, and ennobling may be found in our form of government, our charities, and doctrines, we cannot escape the condemnation of posterity, unless we labour to transmit this beautiful heritage, in every way which the style and taste of this generation may find most effectual to interest those who succeed us.

The author of this little work is a lady of rare qualifications for such an undertaking. A model, herself, in the tuition of her own children, remarkably blessed in the success of her efforts at home, she is constrained by the urgency of her friends, to extend the

benefits of this household training to the youth of our Church at large.

There is an ease, a freshness, an ability in her manner, which reveal to the attentive reader the fact, that what she teaches is thoroughly understood by herself. No prejudice of education ever chained her to the lessons she is spreading to others. Her own early instruction was Unitarian: enlightened, thorough, and various, but firmly Unitarian. The power of Divine grace, however, an earnest and anxious study of the Bible, and the most abundant opportunities for a careful examination of truth on every side, have made her, what the following pages show her to be, an ardent and persuasive advocate for the polity and truth of the Presbyterian Church.

Her object is manifestly to do good, by winning the youthful mind to attentive consideration. Though every way endowed for a profounder investigation of the topics she

handles, there is no parade of research, nor affectation of originality: whatever subserves the simple design of engaging and convincing the young, is the material with which she composes her little volume.

ALEXANDER T. MCGILL.

WHY AM I A PRESBYTERIAN?

PART I.

CHURCH ORDER.

WHY AM I A PRESBYTERIAN?

CHAPTER I.

Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. Eph. v. 25—27.

"My dear aunt," said Mabel Harcourt, one Sabbath evening, as she was sitting at a table in deep examination of a book, "I am in such perplexity, that I must come to you for help." "Do so, and welcome, my dear girl," replied Mrs. Lindsay; "indeed I have for some time been expecting the application, as I have seen you turn over the leaves of my Confession of Faith so rapidly. What is your difficulty?"

"Why, ma'am," returned her niece, "it is just this—I want to know why I am a Presbyterian."

"You a Presbyterian!" exclaimed Herbert Lindsay, who had been so absorbed in the pe-

rusal of a Greek Testament, that his cousin had almost forgotten that he was in hearing—"you a Presbyterian! why I should as soon call my mother's foot-stool by such an appellation—and then the absurdity of your inquiry! If you are a Presbyterian, you ought to know why you bear the name."

"Gently, my son, your cousin did not apply to you," answered his mother. "Do not mind him, my love; but tell us freely all that is on your mind. If you want to know why *I am a Presbyterian*, I answer, because in that Church the gospel was presented to my heart with such power, as to convince me of sin, and bring me to the knowledge of the truth, as it is in Jesus; because I like its order and simplicity of worship; and because its government seems to me as agreeable to Scripture as it is favourable to the rights of the people. How is it that your attention has been turned to this subject?"

"As to that, aunt," replied Mabel, stealing a deprecatory look at Herbert, "though I do not know so much about religion as you and cousin Herbert, I want to be able to say something in defence of our church.—Yes indeed cousin! I have a right to say *our church*—Have I not aunt? For you know I was baptized, when a baby, and have attended there all my life?"

"You are right in your claim of membership in the church of your parents, Mabel," said her aunt, smiling at her earnestness; "but you have not told us the cause of your distress."

"No ma'am, I will do so immediately. Laura Bell and Emma Borrow were arguing about their belief the other day, during recess. Laura is an Episcopalian, and Emma is a Roman Catholic: and when I wished to help Laura out with some texts which she was not clear about, she called me a sectary and a dissenter. So I want to find something in the Confession of Faith in answer to her rudeness."

"You are rather inexperienced for controversy, my child," rejoined Mrs. Lindsay, "and a young lady who received your proffered aid so ungraciously, would not be likely to pay much attention to your arguments. But it is right that you should try to discover the reason of your attachment to the mode of worship adopted by your parents, and I shall gladly assist you in this important investigation."

"I will tell you how to silence your antagonist, Mabel," interposed Herbert: "just ask her to compare the Church Catechism with the Westminster Assembly's question book. The one asks for your names, and talks of godfathers and godmothers; while the other commences with

the best interests of man, and the requirements of Deity."

"If you once begin with the Shorter Catechism, Herbert," said his mother, "you never know when to leave off. What did Emma say to your quotations from Scripture, Mabel?"

"Really, aunt, I liked her better than her opponent, for she kept her temper. What vexed Laura so much was, that when she refused to be called Protestant, and said she was likewise a Catholic, though an English one, Emma told her, that Anglican Catholics often went to Rome before they stopped."

"How different is the Church of England now, mother," said Herbert, "with her medieval predilections, and popish approximation, to what she was in the days of James II., when her bishops submitted to the greatest evils rather than sanction the errors of the king; and when she combined with the dissenters to withstand the progress of Romanism!"

"There is, alas, a lamentable departure from the axiom of Chillingsworth," replied Mrs. Lindsay, "that the Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants. But let us leave these young disputants to settle the merits of their respective communions, and turn our attention to the Church to which we belong. In

defining those who may be classed among its members; in considering its claims to their love and obedience, and in showing some of the rich benefits and spiritual blessings it bestows, we shall find matter for profitable employment on a Sabbath evening. We will confine the exercise to this period, because Herbert will then be with us, to assist us in the derivation of words, facts from Church History, &c."

"Dear mother," answered her son, "I shall like to be a learner too, of one whose acquaintance with Holy Writ is so much more thorough than my own. We will together do our best, to instruct this young neophyte, and to convince her that our Church, if without the splendid trappings of the Romish hierarchy, or the exclusive pretensions of Episcopalianism, is as pure, as holy, and as full of tenderness for the lambs of the flock, as befits 'that Jerusalem which is the mother of us all.' We must, however, defer our discussion till after tea, as I hear the bell now summoning us to our evening meal."

While the trio partook of that refreshment

which cheers but not inebriates,

some account of them may not be unacceptable to the reader, which will be found in the succeeding chapter.

CHAPTER II.

These things write I unto thee, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.—1 Tim. iii. 14, 15.

Mrs. Lindsay was the widow of a clergyman whose talents were as distinguished as his piety was ardent. While he lived she shared his trials, soothed his labours, and was in every respect a help-meet for him. After his death her solicitude was centred in her only son, to whom she devoted herself with all the intensity of a mother's love. Nor was he unworthy of the stock from whence he sprang. Early was he enrolled among the members of the church, during a season of revival which visited the congregation with which his mother was connected; and no sooner had he made "his calling and election sure," than he announced his intention to follow the footsteps of his father, and become a minister of the gospel. This decision was opposed by some of his worldly relatives; while most pleasing to his mother's heart, and not the less so, because she resided within a short distance from a place famed alike for its literary and theological institutions; so that the entire course of study might be prosecuted by

her son, without involving an absence of more than six days from the maternal roof.

Mabel was the eldest daughter of a wealthy Southerner, Mrs. Lindsay's brother. Brought up in luxurious indulgence, and permitted by a weak and sickly mother to control her own actions, much more than was desirable, Mabel was idle, childish, and ill-taught. Her father, though highly gifted, was prevented from taking that supervision of his family which his wife's ill-health and indolence made more necessary, by the engrossing cares of a laborious profession. At length he discovered that some active measures were needed to prevent the ruin of his daughter; and having ascertained that the village where his sister lived contained a female seminary of great merit, he begged Mrs. Lindsay to receive Mabel into her own family, while she attended the school above mentioned.

The request was granted, and soon a material improvement was visible, both in the acquirements and deportment of Mabel. She loved her aunt dearly, and soon became anxious to overcome her deficiencies. Herbert she considered a prodigy of learning and goodness; though he was often wanting in forbearance to her faults, and ridiculed her blunders unmercifully.

Supper over, the table set out, and the lamp

burning brightly, Mabel seated herself in close attention to the movements of her aunt. That lady turned to her son, saying, "Let us first ascertain what is the idea conveyed by the term church."

"Oh! aunt, that is such an easy question, that I can answer it. A place where we go to worship God."

"That is one sense, my dear, but by no means the only one in which the word is used. Your meaning is the same as that given by the Bishop to the Quaker; who replied, 'Paul's church fell on his neck and kissed him, but if *thine* did so, thy neck would be broken.' Let us hear Herbert's definition."

"That," replied the youth, "shall be given verbatim from the Confession of Faith, chapter XXV. 'The *visible* church'—for that is what we are considering—'which is also catholic or universal under the gospel (not confined to one nation as under the law) consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, and their children, and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.'"

"Do not look so frightened at this long quotation, my dear," said Mrs. Lindsay, observing her

niece's bewildered glance—"by analysing it, we shall soon find out its signification. Visible, you know, means what can be seen."

"Yes aunt, but does this refer to the Presbyterian Church?"

"I hope that the body you speak of forms an important part of the visible Church, but it is great arrogance in any denomination to appropriate exclusively a title to which others may lay claim. The next particular in this description is *catholic*. Herbert will tell us its derivation."

"It comes from the Greek words κατα, through, and ὁλος, whole, signifying universal or general. The church of Christ is called catholic, because it extends throughout the world, and is prolonged during all time."

"I thought aunt, that the Catholics were those who go to mass, and obey the Pope,"

"This name was given to the Church in her days of purity," answered Mrs. Lindsay.

"Some say," interrupted Herbert, "that Theodosius the Great first introduced the title, appointing by an edict that it should be given, by way of pre-eminence, to those churches which adhered to the Council of Nice, in exclusion of the Arians, &c. Catholicism, however, soon changed hands, for under Constantius, Arianism became

so predominant that the Arians were called Catholics. It is now as much misapplied in its assumption by the Papacy, the most corrupt and perverted of all, if it may rightly be included among the Churches of Christ."

"That question has perplexed wiser heads than yours, Herbert, and is foreign to our present purpose. You see Mabel, how names are often continued when their original meaning is forgotten. The universal Church was justly called catholic in the time of Polycarp and Ignatius, early fathers, who were the immediate followers of the Apostles; but the name is ill-suited to that communion which has now appropriated it, at the same time retaining so little of the spirit and vitality of religion. Our definition goes on 'under the gospel, (not confined to one nation as under the law)'—what nation is here spoken of?"

"The Jews, ma'am, I suppose; but I thought that God had been angry with them for crucifying our Saviour."

"He was so, my dear girl. The fearful consequences of that crime have acted like a withering curse on the once chosen ones of God, ever since that period. During the Old Testament economy, however, the Jewish people occupied a place of honour and pre-eminence, which was as peculiar as unequalled."

"Yes," said Herbert with animation, "unto them were committed the oracles of the living God; to them pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever!"

"From what time did the Church, under the Old Testament dispensation, date its commencement, Herbert?" asked his mother.

"The first gospel promise, mother, was made immediately after the fall of Adam—that 'the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head;' and we read of a time when men began 'to call upon the name of the Lord;' Enoch is said by Jude to have prophesied of the judgment; and Noah is called 'a preacher of righteousness.' We know also that the Patriarchal age gave peculiar privileges to the head of the family, as the priest, instructer, and ruler of his tribe; such an one as Job appears to have been; but the Church, in her organized capacity, was set up in Abraham, with whom Jehovah made repeated covenants; one of which, called by way of pre-eminence the Abrahamic covenant, instituted circumcision as a visible sign of church membership, by which all the Israelites were brought

into special nearness and connection with God. This part of the subject though, will, I expect, come up more at large hereafter."

"It will," replied his mother. "The book goes on to say that the Church consists of all those throughout the world who profess the true religion."

"Would it not be more correct to say, those that possess the true religion?" interposed Mabel.

"Your criticism would be allowable if we had the power of discerning the heart, answered Mrs. Lindsay; "but as that is beyond the reach of mortals, a credible profession and consistent practice are all that can be demanded. Nor does it appear that the unmasking of hypocrites is always to be performed on earth. The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind; and the tares and wheat are to grow together till the great harvest of judgment shall sunder them.

"Take notice of the phraseology employed—the true religion. In common charity, this must include many who do not range under our distinctive banner, nor is it easy to avoid the two extremes, of either arrogating to ourselves the exclusive favour of our Maker, or indulging in that false liberality which deems all safe, let them believe what they may."

"I wish there were not so many different sects aunt," returned Mabel. "That was what Emma taunted Laura with, the other day. She said that Protestants were always divided among themselves, and that only Catholics possessed the unity of faith."

"From an unity hedged in by rack and faggot, and purchased by withholding alike the word of God, and the right of private judgment, may the Lord deliver us!" said Herbert fervently.

"No doubt, my love," answered Mrs. Lindsay, the differences of Christians—often about the merest trifles, and carried on, as they too frequently are, with asperity and unfairness—are deeply to be deplored. If however Paul, in his day, found that 'some were of Paul, and some of Cephas, and some of Apollos,' can we wonder that a sectarian spirit should so deeply have marred the beauty of Christ's heritage. We know that it will not be so in the millennium, for it is written, 'Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice, with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion.'"

"Will everybody be Presbyterians at that time, aunt?" asked Mabel.

"That is a question I cannot answer, my dear; as far as our principles are in accordance with

Divine truth, they must and will prevail: nor can I see any reason why they are less fitted for that glorious era, than for the present period."

"Of all the systems of ecclesiastical polity," said Herbert, "none are so well suited to every exigency, as our own: like our political constitution, which is based on a similar foundation, Presbyterianism is alike adapted to sway a continent, or direct a single congregation. The federative principle, combined with that of representation, in both preserves the equipoise of contending rights. There is now a Synod in India; what a meeting it will be, when Africa, Polynesia, and the whole extent of territory already occupied by our Domestic Missionaries, shall send their delegates to some chosen centre, which, like a mighty heart, shall extend its vibrations to earth's most distant shore!"

"Do take breath after this excursion of your enthusiasm, Herbert. We were speaking, Mabel, of the difference of sect. Like all other evils, this, we must believe, can be over-ruled for good, by Infinite Wisdom.

"The fact of so many different denominations appealing for proof to the same Bible, has the effect of guarding the sacred pages from interpolation, with the most jealous care. When we see good men, bearing their Master's image,

who do not agree with us, we are taught that charity and toleration which it has been so hard a lesson for the church to learn; and when divine truth is presented under different forms, the minds of men may perhaps find those points which will best suit their peculiar conformation. Thus, some persons feel no attraction but in the fervour of the Methodists; others prefer the liturgical service of the Episcopalians, and another class love our mode of worship with its simple spirituality:

Beyond the pomp which charms the eye,
Or rites adorned with gold.

"Our definition goes on to include, as comprehended in the visible church, not only those who profess the true religion, but their children also. This part of our subject must be omitted for the present. Herbert will now conduct the devotions of the family, (after our trusty domestic has been called) by singing his favourite psalm,

I love thy kingdom, Lord,
The house of thy abode, &c."

CHAPTER III.

Else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.—1 Cor. vii. 14.

Often, during the week, did the thoughts of Mabel revert to the conversation of the preceding

Sabbath; but her school employments, her evening walks with her companions, and the little acts of assistance she now sought eagerly to render in her aunt's well-ordered household, so fully occupied her time, that the days passed rapidly on, till the Sabbath's consecrated hours arrived. The observances of public and family worship took up most of the early part of the day; at length the shadows of evening gathered our little party in Mrs. Lindsay's comfortable parlour, and the subject which specially calls our attention was resumed.

"What is the matter now, Mabel?" demanded Herbert, "have you had another set-to with your school-mates?"

"No cousin, not with those I mentioned to you last Sabbath, but I am not much better off, for all that. I was telling Jane Parker that aunt had been talking to me about the Church, and that it consisted of children as well as grown up persons; when she declared it was all a mistake, that no one had a right to be baptized till they were old enough to answer for themselves, and that baby-sprinkling was of as little use as bowing to an image, or crossing ourselves with holy water."

"That would certainly dismember you, at once, from the church with which you claim affinity, Mabel," said Mrs. Lindsay; "but per-

haps we may be able to convince you that Miss Parker was too hasty in her conclusions. The point of our discussion this evening goes at once to contradict her assertions. In our former conversation, you may remember, that your cousin traced the organization of the Church to Abraham, who is called 'the father of all them that believe.' In Genesis, chapter xvii. we find that the patriarch's name was changed from Abram to Abraham, which signifies 'father of a great multitude;' referring doubtless, to the fact that his spiritual children should be gathered from among the Gentiles, as well as from his natural descendants. Then follows the institution of circumcision, by which every pious Jew was enabled to present his male offspring to the Lord in a visible church capacity.

"Now, as the relation between parent and child is one of the nearest of earthly ties, and as the marriage connexion was ordained by God, as the best possible arrangement for the nurture and training of children, there seems abundant fitness in an organization which includes infants in the benefits of church membership.

"If this fitness existed in the Old Testament dispensation, shall we, in this day of extended privilege, relinquish our right to it, also? The Abrahamic covenant has never been annulled,

even though the natural branches have been lopped off for their unbelief; for the Gentiles have been grafted in, and partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree. In virtue therefore of this it is that pious parents present their children to God in the ordinance of baptism; a sacrament which has superseded circumcision, as better adapted to the nature of the Christian Church, and including both sexes in the fulness of its privilege. Had any change in this respect been the characteristic of the new dispensation, it would assuredly have been made a subject of complaint by those Judaizing teachers, who were so unwilling to consent to any innovation."

"Yes," said Herbert, "that it would: Peter's announcement that 'the promise was to them and to their children,' would hardly have reconciled them to the excision of their progeny. And where our Saviour says, 'Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven,' if we are not to understand this to mean the visible church, the enemies of infant baptism are reduced to the dilemma of excluding those from the church on earth, who, as our Saviour tells us, have a right to that in heaven. And then if infant baptism be not a significant and efficacious thing, why is it that so many who have received

it, are converted and made real Christians? We could scarcely expect such a result if it be merely a commandment of man. Now as to the mode of its administration."

"Miss Parker, aunt," interposed Mabel, "told me that immersion is the only right way; and she says there is a passage in Scripture, where John is said to have been baptizing, 'because there was much water there.'"

"If you would read the first five verses of the eighteenth chapter of Acts, Mabel," said her cousin, "you would see that John's baptism was not obligatory on us as a Christian rite; but was merely an introductory ordinance, suited to the transition state of his own era. The sacrament we are considering was instituted by our Lord, just before his ascension to heaven; when, as his last command, his disciples were instructed to 'baptize all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' Is it not worthy of remark, mother, that no mention is made of 'much water' being required, in any of the baptizings of the Apostles; not even when three thousand received this ordinance, on the day of Pentecost?"

"It is so, my son; but there are other reasons for disputing the necessity of immersion. Under the Mosaic ritual every thing was enjoined in its

utmost minutiæ. From the most important to the most trivial ceremonial observance, the directions given were so explicit that there was no possibility of mistake. In our dispensation, on the contrary, there is none of this detail as to the *letter*, but more direction as to the *spirit* of our worship. Had the mode by immersion been so all-important, surely the precept would have been more clearly marked. As to the argument from the term used in the original, always bearing that meaning, it is fallacious; as there are many passages where it makes nonsense, to give it such a signification."

"Yes indeed, βαπτιζω often stands for immersion, but it cannot mean so, in Luke xi. 13; Mark vii. 4; 1 Cor. x. 2. In the Septuagint also, this same word is translated 'sprinkle.' Isaiah lii. 15."

"Besides," returned his mother, "all those passages which speak of baptism by fire, or by the Holy Ghost, cannot have any reference to the sense contended for; and, in the absence of all specification, the difference of climate, habits, and manners, may well be allowed to modify the practice of the Church. When our Lord washed his disciples' feet, Peter exclaimed, 'Not my feet only but my hands and head:' but his Master answered, 'he that is washed needeth not, save

to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.' So we may say to our Baptist brethren—If we have with us the thing signified by water-baptism, we may well dispense with that submersion of the body, which to you appears so essential. Even if we concede that immersion was the primary idea, by what authority do they decide that our deviation destroys the efficacy of the sacrament altogether? As regard the Lord's Supper, all Protestants deviate more or less from the rite of institution, yet never has it been thought that by so doing they vitiate the purity of that ordinance. The Baptists here are no more literal, in their observance, than others; yet, because of this, no one undertakes to unchurch the whole denomination. Perhaps it would be wiser in our churches to leave a discretionary power with the minister, as in the Episcopal service, to 'dip or sprinkle' as circumstances render expedient; thus allowing a weak brother to receive the rite as his conscience dictates."

"Such was the practice of the primitive Church, mother; where, as is well known, sprinkling and partial washing were used indifferently, and according to present convenience, with immersion, in administering the baptismal service, particularly in the case of clinics, and

those of great delicacy of constitution or of health."

"Thus much for the external method," continued Mrs. Lindsay. "But as we are told in the Larger Catechism, 'The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not by any power in themselves, or any virtue derived from the piety or intention of him by whom they are administered; but only by the working of the Holy Ghost, and the blessing of Christ, by whom they are instituted.' Too many, even in our own Church, appear to consider infant baptism in the light of a charm or talisman, which may affect their children in the prospect of death; while for their healthy ones, it never procures one prayer for instruction, or guidance in the truth, or one feeling that they bear the Saviour's mark, and are devoted to his service. Not but that it is an unspeakable consolation to a parent, to think that his babes who are taken away by death, have had the name of the Lord Jesus named upon them; but his hopes for their salvation, are founded on a surer basis than 'meats or drinks,' or outward observances; even on the finished work of Him who, 'though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich.'"

"There is one argument you have not men-

tioned, mother," said Herbert, "and that is, that when the household of Stephanas, Lydia, and the jailer are said to be baptized, the word used, οικος, generally includes children in its signification. If these were baptized with their parents on the profession of the latter's faith, all is easily accounted for; but while we can hardly imagine these families to have been all without children, we hear nothing of any exception being made, on account of their not being able to make answer for themselves."

"We do not," said his mother, "and therefore we may conclude that they were received into the Christian church—as they would have been assuredly into the Old Testament one—from their relation to the converted parent. Thus Paul says of those who were the offspring of a believer and an idolater: 'Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy,' plainly showing that relative holiness is thus the consequence of their Christian birthright. In other words, that they are holy in the sense in which things themselves inanimate are said to be so, because they are set apart for the service of Jehovah.

"From what has been said this evening, we learn the importance of Christian nurture. The young heir of immortality is to be trained up for

heaven. Confided by the Church to those who have covenanted in the most solemn manner in its behalf, to bring it up for God; in a world surrounded by temptations, allurements, and enemies to their souls, this work is worthy of an angel's love; but it needs a power, more than angelic. Let no one undertake it in his own strength, but 'looking unto Jesus,' seek to do the work more faithfully, more consistently, more successfully.

"Then will there be an efficacy in the ordinances of the sanctuary hitherto unknown, and ministers will no longer be compelled to utter that mournful lamentation, 'Who hath believed our report?'"

CHAPTER IV.

And what, the son of my vows?—PROV. xxxi. 2.
Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee.—PSALM lvi. 12.

"LET us now," resumed Mrs. Lindsay, "consider the claims which the Church has to the love and obedience of its members; and the first remark I would make is this, that all directions for the conduct of professors are equally binding on their children."

"How is that aunt? You would not have

every one that has been baptized come to the sacrament, would you?"

"Far be it from me, my child, to induce any one to approach that sacred table, who has not experienced 'faith to feed upon the Saviour, and that repentance, love, and new obedience,' without which he would be in danger of 'eating and drinking judgment to his own soul.' What I meant was, that the lambs of the flock should be folded in those safe enclosures of word and action which have been deemed needful for the sheep, and that they be no longer permitted to indulge so freely in those amusements which their pious friends avoid and condemn. Can it be believed that the fascinations of the ball-room, and the witchery of the theatre, are not more fatal to the inexperienced mind of youth than they can be to saints matured in holiness? And if the draught be poisonous to the parent, can it be innoxious to the child?"

"But, dear mother, the pursuits you speak of, would have no allurement for a Christian."

"Granted, and hence the propriety of guarding our children against what we know to be so deleterious to ourselves. They discern not the danger, and in their self-will, may blame us for our precautions, or seek to render them vain, but this does not alter the real state of the case; and,

as we would withhold from them the most delicious beverage, if the cup be drugged with death, or snatch from their grasp the gilded bauble that had a dagger's point, so let Christian professors, as far as in them lies, preserve their offspring from that 'friendship of the world which is enmity against God.' They may be called bigotted, morose, and puritanical; but their children, if made partakers of like glorious promises, will thank them for their faithfulness in Heaven; and, even on the other fearful alternative, of their being hardened in sin, it will be some consolation to the authors of their being, that their skirts are free from the blood of those they loved so dearly. The first claim of the Church which I shall bring forward, arises from its object. This a little reflection will enable us to see, in all its importance. We are told by Paul, of 'the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.' And Peter, when speaking of 'the things which had been reported, by those that had preached the gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven,' adds, 'which things, the angels desire to look into.' The first object to be embraced by this

wonderful institution, is to promote the declarative glory of God. Something of this is shadowed forth to us, in the fifth chapter of Revelations, where the new song is sung by those, to rescue whom Christ passed by the nature of angels, and took on him that of the seed of Abraham. A subordinate object, and one worthy of divine origin, is the welfare of mankind. To promote this, he who is 'the head of the body the church,' commenced early in time those manifestations of love, which were 'foreordained before the foundations of the world.' In the covenant made with Abraham, in 'the Church in the wilderness;' in the whole detail of his sufferings, privations, labours, and death, we see abundant proofs that 'he loved the Church and gave himself for it.' Nor was 'this unspeakable gift,' the only one, made to this organization. As a Comforter to cheer his disciples in their orphanage, Christ promised the Holy Spirit, whose miraculous appearance on the day of Pentecost, attested the fact of the Saviour's power with the Father, and proved that his office work was accepted. To this Church also he gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, the sacraments of his house, the Holy Scriptures, the preaching of the word, and the direction of order and discipline. This

Church, against which the gates of hell shall never prevail, has stood the open enmity, and the treacherous friendship of her foes; has been reformed from that mass of error which had, with a few exceptions, so overwhelmed the truth in the fifteenth century, and is now transplanted to distant climes, and savage regions, that 'the desert may rejoice and blossom as a rose.' What higher degrees of efficiency and power are to be conferred upon her, when 'kings shall be her nursing fathers, and their queens her nursing mothers,' you may gather, in some degree, from chapter xlix. of Isaiah. Who can refuse to acknowledge the authority of an institution thus founded, and endowed with privileges so important!"

"You mean authority of a moral and spiritual kind, dear mother, of course."

"Certainly," replied Mrs. Lindsay, "the apostle settles that question when he says, 'the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds;' it is, however, not the less real; nor can its requirements be cast off with impunity, because they do not suit with the corrupt inclinations of our fallen nature."

"If such is the authority of the Church, and so much guilt is incurred by the neglect of it,

aunt," said Mabel, "are not those better off, on whom such a responsibility does not rest?"

"Responsibility and privilege, my dear, go hand in hand. Opportunities neglected enhance our condemnation; but should we, therefore, desire to forego the one, lest we increase the other? Let us rather, in humble dependence on the divine blessing, make use of the means placed in our hands to attain the end for which they were bestowed. While on this part of our subject, I might enlarge on the Author of this Church, as well the pre-eminent attitude it holds in all the announcements in reference to it, but it is getting late, and all we can now do is to glance at the blessings it bestows upon its members, even those who have not assumed their full share in its privileges. It is from these that the Church in an ordinary way derives her increase. Doubtless all of them are more or less the subjects of the strivings of the Spirit; many of them by his restraining grace are preserved from outward sin; others, from having been brought into contact with the means of grace, find the Saviour precious to their souls. Then there are the prayers of the Church, put up by pastors, elders, and holy men, in behalf of the children of the faithful; the instructions of catechizing and Bible classes; the means

of getting and doing good in Sabbath schools, juvenile associations, and missionary societies; and the powerful effects arising from sympathy and intercourse with pious persons. If Christian nurture were as closely observed as its importance demands, there would be less dying out of family piety; and parents would more frequently be permitted to say, 'Here am I, and *all* the children thou hast given me.'"

"But, aunt, good people sometimes have very bad children."

"Whenever this occurs, Mabel, we may be sure there is a flaw somewhere; for the promise is positive and direct, 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.' Some fail in practice, some in faith, while sometimes doubtless, the answer is deferred, to increase our importunity, and show the divine sovereignty of God's dealings with his people. It is an humbling exhibition of the enmity of the natural heart, when we see those who have devoted parents, and yet stand out against every offer of mercy, and force their way to ruin, notwithstanding all that can be done to induce them to turn and live."

"Among the privileges you have mentioned, mother, I do not find one which I can appreciate from my own experience. I mean doctrinal

knowledge of the fundamental truths of religion."

"This, my dear boy, is indeed another item of benefit; and if it does not include a practical view of the subject, still it is important to prevent mistakes, and lay a foundation of sound doctrine in the mind. Thus seed may be sown in the ground, and lie inert for years, which, if exposed to the genial influence of moisture, heat, and air, will germinate and grow. So early instruction in the first principles of the oracles of the living God, cannot avail to change the heart; but when the life-giving Spirit does come, will spring up and flourish under his benign influence. Our first impressions are often the strongest, and return to us in all their force, even after long intervals of time. Thus many a hardened sinner has wept at the remembrance of a mother's prayer, and with his expiring breath repeated truths inculcated in childhood. Thus may the pious parent hope for a fulfilment of that promise 'I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring, and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses.'"

CHAPTER V.

Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.—1 Tim. iv. 14.

"Well, little student, what fresh trouble has overtaken you?" asked Herbert on the succeeding Sabbath evening, as he looked in the face of his cousin.

"Oh! Herbert, I am afraid that aunt and you will think your time ill-spent in teaching me; when I am with you, every thing seems plain, yet the least objection made by others overturns all that has been said."

"Do not be uneasy about that, my child," returned her aunt, "we wish you to receive what we say, only as it accords with Scripture, and the fact of its being controverted has the effect of giving interest to our discussions, and impressing them more strongly on your mind. Tell us what is your present difficulty?"

"You know, aunt, that Bishop Wilkins is in the village, and Laura Bell says he is one of the regular successors of the apostles, and that there were no Presbyterians till the days of John Calvin; and as you were talking to me about the Church, I thought perhaps you would say some-

thing respecting its government; but I was afraid cousin Herbert would laugh at me, if I proposed such a thing."

"I am sure, my love, that your cousin will never ridicule a wish for knowledge, especially if it relate to that system which he holds in such esteem. Church government is certainly included in our subject, though, fearing it might be uninteresting to you, I had intended to omit it. But as you wish for information I will try to make things as simple as possible. Every institution requires laws for its regulation, and these laws to be binding must be issued by a a competent authority. Acting on these principles, Presbyterians acknowledge no ordinances but such as are founded on the word of God, and bear the impress of the authority of Christ, the King and Head of his body the Church, The term Presbyterian comes from a Greek word. Herbert, tell us its derivation."

"Πρεσβυτερος, mother, is literally an aged person, translated elder, in the common version of the Bible. This title was well known to the Jews, who had elders over the nation, as well as over every city, and smaller community. Then there were the elders of the synagogue."

"It is impossible for us," said Mrs. Lindsay, "to fix the time for the first use of synagogues

in Israel. They are mentioned in the seventy-fourth Psalm, supposed to have been written during the Babylonish captivity; and, before our Saviour's time, were very numerous in the land of Judea. It is from them we trace our form of government, as regards the office of ruling elder."

"The Episcopalians, mother, will tell you that the temple worship was the model for the arrangement of the Christian edifice."

"There I cannot agree with them. The temple, with it gorgeous decorations and costly ritual, was admirably suited to the dispensation of types and shadows, but, like that, was to disappear before the milder and more enlightened period which should succeed to it. There is no similarity between the three ranks of the Aaronic priesthood, and the bishops, priests, and deacons of Episcopacy; nor are Christ's ministers once termed *priests* in the New Testament. The idea of a hierarchy at all, either with or without a visible earthly head, has no warrant from Scripture; nay, is even opposed to such declarations as these: 'My kingdom is not of this world.' 'Whosoever will be great among you let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.' Christ appeared in the temple, only as a wor-

shipper and public teacher, not as a priest. In the course of his life we often read of his worshipping in the synagogues and preaching there; so Saul of Tarsus after his conversion 'preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.' This practice was universal among the apostles, all of whom being Jews were well acquainted with the mode of government therein prevalent. We know too that our Lord, who while he never shrunk from rectifying abuses, was tender of the national feelings of his countrymen, did not wish to put 'new wine in old bottles,' and 'suffered it to be so;' we can therefore see great propriety in his adopting for the government of the nascent kingdom, an order of things with which they were familiar. Twice is this word applied to Christian assemblies, (Heb. x. 25. James ii. 2.) which certainly would indicate that a similarity of organization was observed. When our Lord said 'Tell it to the church,' the only one then existing was the Jewish one; and unless we take the congregational plan, and suppose that every grievance was to be published to every one in fellowship in the society, it must mean the elders of the synagogue, whose special office it was to redress complaints, settle differences, and administer discipline. In many places in the New Testament, a plurality of

Presbyters were ordained in the same church, and the mass of the people are spoken of as under their authority. 'Let the Presbyters that rule well,' says Paul to Timothy, 'be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.' In this text, dear Mabel, is contained the germ of Presbyterianism. Two classes, both bearing the name of Presbyter are distinctly marked. One to rule and preach, the other to rule only. The one class, 'as ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by them, pray you in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God.' The other, as they 'that rule with diligence,' 'governments,' 'they that have the rule over you,' whom the Hebrews were exhorted 'to submit to' and 'obey.' Preaching and the pastoral office are committed to the first; whose entrance into the ministry is guarded by every precaution which human wisdom can suggest; and who, after a defined course of instruction and preparation, are 'by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery,' admitted to that parity of office, which is the dearest portion of our polity. Ruling is the appropriate function of the second, who, chosen from the people, represent them, protect their rights, and with the minister, constitute the session, the primary church court.

The Presbytery consists of all the ministers and one ruling elder from each congregation within a certain district; (Chap. X. Sec. 2, Form of Government,) and from this judicatory, which is properly speaking the source of power, a delegated number of ministers and elders are sent to the General Assembly—the last resort for appeal or redress, which meets annually. The Synod is a collection of Presbyteries formed on the same ratio; and is amenable to the Assembly for its decisions, which are either confirmed or reversed as the collective voice of the Assembly shall resolve. This form of government is so just, so simple, so well fitted to the wants of the Church, we have difficulty in accounting for the fact of its having so soon been superseded by Prelacy or Diocesan Episcopacy; unless we conclude that the change was produced, either by a misconception of the nature of the Jewish Theocracy, or by that approximation to heathenism, which as soon as the flames of persecution were exchanged for the patronage of the Emperor, required a Christian bishop to succeed the Pontifex Maximus, even as the idol temples were transformed into places of worship for the prevalent religion.

"As to the assertion that Calvin invented the office of ruling elder, which I suppose was what

Miss Bell meant, I think it is evident that it takes its origin from a higher antiquity; and, as to his introducing them among the Waldenses or Christians of the Valleys, there is full evidence that he found them there, and availed himself of this discovery to introduce them into the Reformed Churches. Let any unprejudiced mind view those countries where Presbyterianism has prevailed—Scotland, Holland, and Switzerland, and compare the intelligence, the piety, the love of liberty, civil and religious, evinced by these nations, with those of their neighbours, and they will not lose by the process. If any doubt of the importance of the eldership as a distinct class of our ecclesiastical polity exist, one glance at the past will furnish cogent proof of their utility in the councils of the Church, where their plain sense and strong attachment to the 'old paths, where is the good way,' have often proved a beneficial counterpoise to that love of novelty and tendency to the vain babblings and opposition of science, falsely so called, which are so frequently induced by the studious habits and sedentary pursuits of the preaching presbyter."

"But, mother, you have not yet said any thing about the apostolic succession contended for by Romanists and Episcopalians."

"The lateness of the hour gives me little time to dispose of a question on which the High

Church Episcopalians join issue with that Church which condemned a Hooper, a Ridley, and a Cranmer to the flames. I need not tell you, Herbert, who are so familiar with your Greek Testament, that *bishop* and *presbyter* are convertible terms, applied indiscriminately to the same class of office-bearers in the Church. Thus Paul sent for the elders of the church, and told them, 'take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you *bishops*.' In his epistle to Titus the same apostle says: 'For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain presbyters in every city, as I had appointed thee: if any be *blameless*, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly. *For a bishop must be blameless*,' &c."

"Does it not seem rather inconsistent, mother, in the Episcopalians to use your first quotation in the ordination service of a bishop or archbishop? As to the second, they assert that it proves Titus to have been bishop of Crete, as Timothy was of Ephesus."

"Let their assertion, my son, give place to Paul's exhortation, when he tells Timothy to do 'the work of an evangelist.' It was in consequence of bearing this office, designed to assist the apostles in their arduous duties, though like

them not intended to be permanent in the Church, that these young men were appointed to ordain presbyters, reprimand and excommunicate offenders, and set all things in order in the churches they visited. Presbyters, however, are not only termed bishops, but they actually exercised authority in the Church, in conjunction with the apostles themselves, and on the principle of parity. This you will find exemplified in Acts xv. where 'Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them,' were appointed to go to the apostles and presbyters at Jerusalem, to appeal from the decision of the judaizing teachers who had come down from Judea. On this occasion the apostles acted as members of this meeting simply; not appealing to their extraordinary powers, nor introducing any influence, save that of facts, of written Scripture, and of argument on both. Thus in the Synod of Jerusalem all the decisions are made in the name of the apostles and presbyters, Acts xv. 2, and the word employed to express the result of their deliberations is δογμα, a decree or authoritative verdict, Acts xvi. 4. Peter says, 'the elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder," &c. This does not look like primacy, nor does his exhortation seem to have had much weight with his nominal successors, who certainly were more anxious to be 'lords over God's

heritage,' than 'examples to the flock.' If Peter possessed any primacy, it was more that of age and character than of office. None of the twelve, except Judas Iscariot, sinned so deeply, or was reproved so repeatedly; and the passage which has been brought to support this fallacy, Matt. xvi. 16, is more likely to refer to Christ, the Rock of Ages, than to the name of Peter, which signifies a stone."

"Yes, mother, and the change from the masculine πετρος to πετρα, a feminine noun, often applied to our Lord, Rom. ix. 33; 1 Cor. x. 4; 1 Pet. ii. 8, is easily accounted for, if himself or his own Messiahship be the foundation; but if Peter is to be elevated so far above the other apostles, it is difficult to be explained."

"We cannot," continued Mrs. Lindsay, "allow that the diocesan bishops of any Church can be successors to the apostles, in another sense than that in which all faithful ministers may be called so; because it would seem from Acts i. 21, 22; 1 Cor. ix. 1, to have been essential to an apostle to have seen the Lord Jesus; and because also, there is no intimation of successors ever having been appointed to this class of church officers. We believe them to have been extraordinary in their mission and miraculous powers; and, therefore, not needed to continue beyond the term of their own existence. That the Papacy

should talk of the uninterrupted succession of ecclesiastical authority, is perhaps not surprising, though in so doing, their statements are at variance with the history of the Church, when we see popes with councils rejecting the decrees of preceding popes with councils; and when popes without councils have done the same, as well as councils without popes; but that the Episcopal Church, once one of the firmest bulwarks against the Papacy, should uphold her in pretensions so unscriptural, and should unchurch all her Protestant sisters, to claim descent from, and affinity with, this corrupt and priest-ridden denomination, must call forth alike the sorrow and indignation of those whom she has thus aggrieved.

"We have now, my dear girl, come to the conclusion of the course intended to vidicate our order and discipline as a Church. Let me call your attention to the fact, that there is a large number in it who have been introduced into its enrolment by virtue of the faith of their parents. Oh! that my voice might reach these careless ones, for whom

> The public prayer is made,
> The private tear is shed;

and have the power to convince them, that all this array of privilege bears with it an extent of

responsibility, which, if not improved in time, will bear hard on their souls through an endless eternity. The water of baptism has been shed upon their brow—the prayers of the Church are offered in their behalf—their feet are early led to the sanctuary—their ears are familiar with the language of Canaan—their hearts are often convicted of sin by the Spirit of Holiness—to them are unfolded the gates of Heaven, and the portals of Tophet—'heaven and earth is called to record against them, that there has been set before them death and life, blessing and cursing;' may they then 'choose life that their souls may live!' "

A profound silence here ensued, but it was easy to perceive that Mabel had listened attentively to her aunt's address. From this time it was evident that a change—silent indeed, and unobtrusive, but real—had taken place in her feelings on the subject of religion. To Herbert, also, the conversations here detailed, were not without their use. He felt humbled, that one so highly favoured had not made more progress in the divine life; and as he reviewed some of the principles of his faith, he longed for the time when he should stand forth the accredited minister of his Church, to defend her from

treacherous friends, and open enemies, and avouch to the world, that 'after the way which' some 'call heresy, so worshipped he the God of his fathers.' While to Mrs. Lindsay this brief review of the evidences of her Church's order only enkindled her love for its ordinances, and her desire to feed the lambs of her Saviour's flock. Although her prayers for her son had been so signally answered, she did not attribute the blessing to her own deserving; and her heart still yearned in sympathy for parents who beheld not *all their children* walking in the 'strait and narrow way.' More especially did she lament, when talent, acquirement, amiable exterior, and religious parentage, all centred in those youth who turned their thoughts to other objects than the service of God and devotedness to his cause; for she knew, at this juncture, that the Church had need of such to occupy places of honour and usefulness, and to convince the ungodly that there still were some who would 'come to the help of the Lord against the mighty.'

THE END.

WHY AM I A PRESBYTERIAN?

PART II.

A VINDICATION OF DOCTRINE.

WHY AM I A PRESBYTERIAN?

CHAPTER I.

Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and
hast crowned him with glory and honour.
Upholding all things by the word of His power.

"Do you know, aunt," said Mabel Harcourt, one fine Sabbath evening in the spring, "that I am not satisfied with those conversations we held last winter," on the order and government of the Presbyterian Church."

"Not satisfied, Mabel!" exclaimed Herbert Lindsay indignantly, "then you are indeed incorrigible; and if the direct Scripture proof, and the analogy of faith, by which my mother established her positions, cannot convince you, I hope she will give up all further endeavours in despair."

"Gently, cousin," replied Mabel, "you quite mistake me. I am convinced by the past conversations, but that does not prevent my wishing to have them renewed on other subjects; and that

was what I meant, when I said that I was not satisfied."

"Oh! if that is the case," returned Herbert, a little ashamed of his impetuosity, "I ask your pardon for my abruptness. The only excuse I can make is, that my church and my mother are very tender points, and that to impugn either, is more than my philosophy can stand."

"You might give me credit for love to the first, and gratitude to the second, cousin;" answered Mabel, fondly caressing Mrs. Lindsay as she spoke. "You remember aunt, you promised to instruct me in some of the doctrines of the church."

"I did so," said that lady, "and if you like, we will begin to-night. When shall we commence Herbert? You must be doubly communicative, to make up for your late petulance."

"I will do all I can mother. Let us attend to the effects

> 'Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
> Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
> Brought death into the world and all our woe.'"

"Willingly," replied his mother, "on condition however, that you do not substitute Milton for Scripture. But before we come to this fatal act, let us take a peep at the 'blissful bower' of

Paradise, and consider its favoured inmates in their pristine purity. A situation more fitted for enjoyment than theirs, it is difficult to imagine. The possession of life, natural and spiritual, in its novelty and vigour, the circumstances of abundance and comfort in which they were placed, the dominion given them over the newly decorated earth, and the animals which it contained—the consciousness of being made in their Maker's image, 'without spot or wrinkle or any such thing,' the friendship and communion of God and good angels, the companionship and delights of wedded love, without torment or alloy, a perfect freedom from sickness, want, or care, and an exemption from all those 'ills which flesh is heir to' in our present 'state of sin and misery;' what more could man desire? Even here, however, the desire for forbidden gratification crept in, and defiled the garden of the Lord! Mabel you can inform us how God executes his decrees."

"The Shorter Catechism tells us, aunt, that it is in the works of creation and providence."

"It does so, and these two great departments of almighty power, comprehend all that we know of his dealings with his creatures. They often appear to be almost synonymous; for the preservation of existence has been termed a con-

tinual creation; while on the other hand what are called the laws of nature, secure to every species the means of reproduction. 'God's works of providence' however comprehend not only 'the preserving' but 'the governing all his creatures, and all their actions.'"

"Aunt, I should like to know what you think about a particular providence. You know poor Laura Bridgeman was so distressed, to find that God did not literally number the very hairs of her head."

"The poor child's infirmity, would doubtless make all metaphor difficult to her comprehension. 'Providence, is the care which God takes of all things, to uphold them in being, and direct them to the ends which he has determined to accomplish by them, so that nothing takes place, in which he is not concerned in a manner worthy of his infinite perfections, and which is not in unison with the counsel of his will.'"*

"A particular providence, includes the idea of watchful care, exercised over every thing that lives. This is explicitly taught in Scripture. 'Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more

* Dick's Theology.

value than many sparrows.' It also extends to government as well as preservation. Thus the Deity limits and overrules sinful actions; orders things, themselves evil, in such a manner as to conduce to beneficial results; converts chastisements into blessings, and makes 'all things work together for good to them that love God.' Often is providence mysterious and hard to unravel. The wicked appear to triumph while innocence suffers; but we must remember that there is a time coming, when all these mysteries shall be solved, and the righteous Judge will vindicate his moral government. Man being a responsible agent, is of course pre-eminently concerned, to know and do the will of his Heavenly Father. This in his state of pristine purity was his privilege and delight. To a holy being, the duties of prayer and praise would seem like fulfilling the promptings of his nature. This government of God was exercised in Eden. We find therefore that 'when God had created man he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience, forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death.'"

"It seemed very ungrateful in Eve, aunt, to listen to that subtle serpent, rather than obey God."

"Yes!" replied Mrs. Lindsay, "we cannot conceive of a probationary state more favourable than that in which Adam and Eve were placed. Sin was excluded from every avenue but one; and that so plainly marked, so easy of avoidance, and so unnecessary to comfort, safety, or sustenance, that no excuse can be made for its infraction."

"And yet," said Herbert, "objectors speak of this trial as arbitrary and tyrannical on the part of Jehovah; forgetting that he who gave so much had power to restrict as well as to bestow. In the answer just quoted, mother, we hear of a covenant of life. Do you suppose it is so called because eternal life was the stipulation on the part of God?"

"I do. Will you describe the covenant of works, my son."

"The covenant of works, mother, is no other than a law, requiring obedience and prohibiting disobedience, with a reward to the first, and a penalty to the latter. Only sinless creatures could be placed under such a covenant, because their spotless character is such as to admit of their justification on the ground of their own obedience: had that continued, their reward must follow from the conditions entered into, and no atonement could be required.

Thus Adam would have been justified, had he continued obedient, and the happiness of his whole race would have been insured, including the continuance of natural life, consisting in the union of soul and body; the continuance of spiritual life, consisting in the favour of God; and the possession of eternal life in heaven."

"But, aunt," asked Mabel, "how came it that God permitted Adam and Eve to be tempted by the serpent? Could he not have ordered things otherwise?"

"Take care, my love, how you encourage a spirit of speculation on these subjects. The introduction of moral evil into the world, is one of those depths in which human wisdom is utterly confounded. Man was endowed with free will, which implies the power of choice for good or for evil. When he chose evil, an act in itself unimportant, became of the greatest consequence: involving rebellion against the lawgiver; renunciation of his authority; and the dissolving of that moral dependence on his Maker, which is founded on the nature of things, and is necessary to maintain the order and happiness of the universe. We must distinguish between things which God permits, and those which he approves. Had not some ultimate good been the result, we must suppose that a

Being of infinite wisdom, and unlimited power, would not have allowed his plans to be frustrated by any hostile agency whatever. Perhaps there was a necessity for a display of Divine justice, to establish other orders of beings in their allegiance, and make known his holiness to creation's utmost bound. Be this as it may, the creature's sin has been the instrumentality in the hands of the Creator, by which a new and better covenant, even 'the covenant of peace,' has been established; in which a portion of the ruined race have been brought again into favour and acceptance; while the humiliation and sufferings of his own Son, by which the remedial plan has been wrought out, prove his spotless purity, and jealous rectitude more strongly than if the penalty of death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, had been inflicted on the offenders and all their posterity. But it is late. We must defer this conversation till next Sabbath.

CHAPTER II.

In Adam all die.
The serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety.

The evening of the Sabbath returned, and the trio gathered round the table in Mrs. Lindsay's comfortable parlour. That lady commenced the

conversation by saying; "Many have been the speculations as to the time spent by our progenitors in the delightful spot alloted to them. Some commentators limit their abode there to a single day, others extend it to weeks, months, or even years. The first opinion cuts short the period of holiness to an ephemeral duration; and it appears a waste of creative energy to prepare a paradise for so limited a stay. No doubt they remained there long enough, to enhance, by the remembrance of past enjoyment, the evils brought on them by their disobedience."

"Mother, what do you understand by the tree of life?"

"Just what the name imports. A tree which, either from its inherent qualities, or by the appointment of God, so nourished the body, so fed the flame of life, as to interpose a barrier to all the assaults of decomposition. That it had a symbolical meaning, and perhaps was a sacramental representation of eternal life, does not interfere with the original idea. It is supposed from the words used by the Divine Being, Gen. iv. 22, that Adam had not partaken previously of the tree of life; but as no prohibition existed, there is no reason to assert that he had not eaten of its fruit; and the passage referred to, may

apply as well to a continuation, as to the commencement of this life-giving food."

"But, mother, do you know that Witsius, in his work on the Covenants, reprobates your views as an error of Socinus and others?"

"It may be so; but I was early taught in my religious career to call no uninspired man, master; and on this subject, Lowth, in his Commentary, quotes the names of Ireneus, Chrysostom, Theodoret, and especially Gregory Nazianzen, as holding the same opinion with myself. Whether man had actually tasted of the fruit of this tree, or whether it was held up as a reward for his obedience, may be a matter of doubt; but no question can arise as to his eating of the other tree in the midst of the garden; thus breaking through the only restriction laid on him by his Maker, and barring all access to 'the way of the tree of life,' till the second Adam, 'by a new and living way,' opened the gates of that better paradise, where, 'in the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river grows the tree of life.' Before we leave this

'—— happy rural seat of various view;
Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balm,
Others whose fruit burnished with golden rind
Hung amiable, Hesperian fables true,
If true, here only, and of delicious taste;

Betwixt them lawns, or level downs, and flocks
Grazing the tender herb, were interposed
On palmy hillock; or the flowing lap
Of some irriguous valley spread her store
Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose;'

let us remark the high honour put on horticultural occupations. The first man, in his unfallen state was a gardener; and though we have not so delightful a scene of labour, thorns and thistles will thwart our plans, and tares spring up to choke the crop, still is the employment well fitted to elevate the mind, while it invigorates the body."

"I thought, dear mother, that you could not depart from Eden, without giving an eulogy on your favourite pursuit. What think you of the name given to the forbidden tree?"

"I think my son, the idea is, that by eating this fruit, man knew experimentally what good he had lost, and what evil he had preferred. There is however another sense in which the term may be used. Adam's disobedience was overruled to make him acquainted, not only with sin, the worst of evils; but with that highest good to our ruined race, even salvation through a Redemer. Certain it is, that in some sense, though not in a desirable one, our first parents increased their knowledge by the fall. 'Their

eyes were opened,' and the holy simplicity and childlike innocence of Paradise were lost."

"Then aunt," said Mabel, "you do not think our great ancester was as refined and intellectual, as Milton represents him. "I do not like to have him disparaged, and have all my feelings of reverence for him destroyed."

"I am far from wishing to disparage a being, formed in the image of his Maker, and made the lord of all below. But a moment's reflection will show us, that however enlightened by communications with his Maker, and favoured above all his posterity in position, as well as purity, our first father was placed in circumstances so unlike those of any of his posterity, that much of our boasted knowledge would have been worse than useless to him. While 'upright' as 'God made him,' he needed not 'the many inventions' that have since then been 'sought out.' Now to the agent of this mischief. Scripture gives us intimation of a higher order of beings who swerved from their allegiance to their Creator: thus Jude speaks of 'the angels which kept not their first estate;' and Peter says, 'God spared not the angels that sinned;' Satan, that is 'the adversary,' also called 'the father of lies,' was the tempter who deluded so successfully our 'general mother.' The shape

taken by this evil spirit, has occasioned much discussion among the learned. Dr. Clarke makes it out to be that of an ourang outang, because of some resemblance to an Arabic word. To me, it seems more probable that the foe of God and man assumed the appearance of a winged fiery serpent, of surpassing brightness, like those in Numbers xxi. 6, 8, there called seraphim; this term is applied also to the highest order of angels, Isa. vi. 2, 6, who perhaps wore some such form with flaming wings. Now, we are told that 'Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light;' if, therefore, he was permitted to put on the similitude of one of those heavenly messengers, whom Eve was accustomed to behold, we may easily imagine, how, dazzled by his splendour, and fascinated by his persuasions, she yielded to his solicitations 'and took of the fruit and did eat.'"

"Well, you make all possible apology for Eve's frailty, mother; do you think with the blind poet that Adam

> 'Scrupled not to eat
> Against his better knowledge not deceived,
> But fondly overcome with female charm?'"

"Mistake me not, my son. I do not wish to excuse, but to account for, the transgression of the first woman. Nor do I think so

highly of her husband's love, as to suppose *that* was the sole inducement for his compliance; though compelled to admit that 'the woman being deceived, was first in the transgression.' Most probably the sight of Eve's apparent safety, after eating the forbidden fruit, made Adam suppose he might do so with impunity likewise, or he might have been persuaded by the same aspiring hopes of increased acquirement."

"And yet, mother, Paul says 'Adam was not deceived.'"

"He does so. But perhaps the idea is, to complete the antithesis of Adam's priority of creation, and Eve's priority in sin. If he was not like her, deluded, he must have sinned presumptuously, which only increases his guilt, since Eve was not intended for his ruler, but only for his helpmeet; and therefore her apostacy should not have had power to influence him.

'Suffice it for our purpose that the rash act was done.
Earth trembled from her entrails, as again
In pangs, and nature gave a second groan,
Sky lowered, and muttering thunder, some sad drops
Wept at completing of the mortal sin
Original.'

How great was the dismay and remorse of

the transgressors, we may discover from the sacred narrative.

"Instead of the former intimate and friendly intercourse with their Creator, they sought to hide themselves from his presence when 'they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden, in the cool of the day.' Vain purpose! The offended Deity calls the guilty pair, their own words condemn them, and sentence is passed alike on them, and on the tempter. Sorrow, and subjection to the woman; for, before this period, we have no hint of her inferiority; labour and toil to the man, and death to both, including all their posterity, is the awful doom, incurred by a gratification of appetite, as deceitful as it was transitory. But even here mercy was displayed; the serpent only was cursed; while a promise, obscure indeed, but significant in the highest degree, announced victory to the seed of the woman, while foretelling his partial subjection, for a time, to the powers of evil. We must suppose that this intimation of a Saviour to come, was connected with the next event narrated, the clothing of Adam and Eve with the 'coats of skins,' stripped from the quivering flesh of those animals who had hitherto partaken in the immunities of Paradise, but were now to groan and be subject to suffering, in common with

creation's lord. No doubt their bodies were offered in sacrifice, for in the very next chapter we are told that 'Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering.' Thus was the faith of believers before Christ, directed to 'the Lamb of God which should take away the sin of the world.' Expulsion from the garden was then enforced on the offenders; as your author has it, Herbert,

'They looking back, all th' eastern coast beheld
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
Waved over by that flaming brand, the gate
With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms;
Some natural tears they dropt, but wiped them soon,
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.'

"Not with sentence pronounced, and banishment inflicted, terminated the ills thus brought upon themselves and their posterity, by the first parents of our race; 'the misery of that estate whereinto man fell,' was aggravated by its 'sinfulness;' and both were the precursors of that condemnation which denounces 'indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil.'"

"And yet aunt, there are many who deny the doctrine of original sin."

"There have been objections to it in all ages, because it is sadly repugnant to the pride of the human heart; but Scripture and experience alike testify to its truth. We are told that 'the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, commonly called original sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.' Here we find that Adam being the federal head and representative of the whole human race, they, though yet unborn, became liable to the punishment pronounced against himself, and became guilty through his guilt which is imputed to them, or placed to their account; so that they are treated as if they had personally broken the covenant. How else can we understand the words 'by one man's disobedience many were made sinners.' 'In Adam all die.' 'By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.'"

"And yet, aunt, it seems hard that all should suffer for the fault of one."

"Consider, on the other hand, my dear, how great would have been the benefit, had Adam remained steadfast. This is a view of the subject we are apt to overlook; but however disad-

vantageously things have terminated, we ought always to recollect that the covenant of works was a proof of the goodness of God. Its immediate aim was to insure the happiness of the whole race, in a compendious way, by suspending it on the obedience of our common progenitor, to whom the condition prescribed was perfectly easy. The imputation of Adam's sin, like that of Christ's righteousness, is one of those leading principles in theology which the natural heart abhors. The headship of the first parent of men is proved by the prevalence of temporal death. Even those who are incapable of actual sin fall victims to the universal destroyer. As Paul says, 'Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.'"

"You mean infants, aunt, do you not? I am so anxious to hear what you will tell us about them; for one of the school girls said the Calvinists believed that there were infants in hell, of a span long."

"My love, it is not easy to account for all the harsh unwarrantable things that have been said on both sides of the question. I cannot think that any of our Church hold the opinion you have mentioned; but even if it were so, that

would not sanction an hypothesis which savours more of a Moloch than of Christ; and is by no means deducible from the language either of the Confession of Faith or of Presbyterians themselves. The book does indeed speak of 'elect infants,' but says nothing that in the least approaches to the sentiment you have quoted. Some persons think that the state of infants in another world has not been made known to us in the Scriptures; but, to my mind, there is abundant reason to suppose that the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, will blot out the taint of their birth-sin, and admit them to that 'kingdom of heaven' to which he has declared them to belong."

"That is the same idea, aunt, as is expressed in the lines you wrote in Herbert's Bible, when speaking of your babes that died.

> 'The stain of earth that each inherits
> Counts not against their Saviour's merits,
> In that bright world above.'"

"It is, my dear, and especially have believers ground of hope and consolation for their infants taken from them by death; even as David thought with regard to his child, 'I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.' The slander you speak of, however, has been so often

refuted that it is now almost obsolete, and it is seldom uttered where there is any possibility of its being contradicted. But to proceed. Another passage which may be quoted in proof of the imputation of Adam's guilt to his posterity, and their consequent obnoxiousness to punishment, is the following: 'And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature children of wrath even as others. David, in the fifty-first Psalm, while acknowledging an aggravated actual offence, traces up his guilt to original corruption, in the fifth verse. Too soon was Adam, by the death of his righteous son, made to realize the difference between his own formation, 'in the image of God,' and the state in which his descendants were born, 'in his own likeness after his image' of defilement and of sin; and in the sixth chapter of Genesis, we read that 'the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.'

Indeed so 'corrupt was the earth before God,' and so 'filled with violence,' that the whole population, except eight persons, were swept away by the flood as by a swift destruction. Since that overwhelming dispensation, the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah; the plagues of Egypt; the judgments incurred by the Israelites in the wilderness; and, above all, the calamities inflicted on the Jews for their rejection and crucifixion of the Saviour, may give us some idea that 'it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God' in the way of punishment. It is not here, however, that sin will find its justly merited doom. The present life is one of sufferance, where 'God maketh his sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust;' it is reserved to the day of final retribution, to manifest the righteousness of God in condemning the impenitent; when he will 'execute judgment upon all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.' The terrors of that awful day, the human heart has no power to comprehend; nor can they be realized by any, save those who shall experience the wrath of Jehovah. May we, dear children, belong to a different

class! even to those who shall receive the welcome invitation; 'Come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'"

CHAPTER III.

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.
A Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

"Dear aunt," said Mabel on the next Sabbath evening, "things were left last Sabbath in a very gloomy condition, as regards poor fallen human nature. Surely you have better tidings for us to-night?"

"I have, my dear, emphatically good tidings to communicate, even the advent of Him whose birth was the signal for the announcement of 'peace on earth, and good will to men.' Herbert, what says the answer to the twentieth question?"

"It says, mother, that 'God, having out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and bring them into a state of salvation by a Redeemer.'"

"The mighty doctrines contained in the first part of this answer, will be considered hereafter; at present I refer you to the truth with which it concludes—salvation by a Redeemer. This precious fact was, as we have seen, obscurely though definitely referred to in the sentence pronounced against the serpent; while the language of Eve on the birth of Cain, seems to intimate that she considered him to be the one who was to accomplish the sacred oracle. The practice of sacrifice too, so early begun, and so signally approved by God, was doubtless intended to direct men's faith to 'the Lamb of God,' which should take away the sin of the world. Abraham, the friend of God, received the following promise, after his offering up Isaac on Mount Moriah. 'By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall the nations of the earth be blessed.' This promise is applied to Christ, to whom only it can refer, in many places in the New Testament, which you may consult at your leisure, Luke i. 72; Acts

iii. 25; Gal. iii. 8—16. Jacob, when blessing the tribes of Israel, declared that 'the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet till Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.' What is meant by the term Shiloh, commentators are not agreed; some thinking that it signifies 'sent,' others 'peaceful,' or 'prosperous,' and a third class supposing it to refer to the miraculous circumstances of the birth of Christ. All writers, however, whether Jewish or Christian, allow that it specially designates the Messiah, and restricts his lineage to the tribe of Judah. Hence the difficulty found by the former to reconcile this prophecy with the present state of their nation, so long without a ruler or a country; though, as they pretend, Shiloh has not yet appeared."

"But, aunt, when our Saviour came, Judea was ruled by the Romans, under whom the Jews were in subjection. How then can it be said that the sceptre had not departed from Judah?"

"While Judea was governed by her own princes, as was the case till the Babylonish captivity, the kingly power was exercised by the tribe of Judah, which the word Schebet—here translated sceptre—is supposed to refer to. After that time they were under the sway of

inferior rulers, such as Zorobabel, the Seleucidae, and the Maccabees, characterized by the term lawgiver; till they were enrolled in the Roman empire, at the taxation made when Christ was born in Bethlehem. Enough, however, of power was continued to the Jews by the Roman policy, to make the rejection and condemnation of the Saviour their own act, though the punishment of death was not within their prerogative. Balaam spoke of Christ under the figure of 'a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre' that 'shall rise out of Israel;' and Moses foretold the prophetic office of the Redeemer when he said, 'The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me.' David also, was told from God, by Nathan the prophet, 'I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever,' &c. Here, though there is much that refers to Solomon, there are many passages that can only be applied to his great anti-type; to whom his name, (signifying peaceable) wisdom, and prosperity, are all so many appropriate features of resemblance. This is especially applied to Christ by the angel, Luke i. 32, 33."

"In the Psalms, too, mother, how many there are that, though they may primarily relate to Solomon and his espousals to Pharaoh's daughter, have their secondary and greater accomplishment in the extent of the Messiah's kingdom, and the growth of his church!"

"Yes! my son, the seventy-second, forty-fifth, one hundred and tenth, second, and sixty-eighth, all bear record of our Saviour's triumphs. But there is another class, which speak of his sufferings, humiliation, and death, in terms equally unmistakeable. Among these are the twenty-second, thirty-first, sixty-ninth, thirty-fifth, and seventy-first. When we come to Isaiah who has been called the fifth Evangelist, the light of prophecy shines more brightly. He announces Christ in the following passage of unequalled sublimity. 'For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.' Here Mabel, for your instruction, let me remark, that when it is

said his name shall be called, it does not mean that he should actually bear these names in real life, but that he should deserve them, and that they would describe his character. Wonderful—this was applied to himself by the angel-Jehovah who appeared to Manoah, as it is in the margin, 'secret,' in the text. And perhaps it refers to that 'mystery of godliness,' by which 'the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." Counsellor—intimate with all his Father's counsels and decrees—'set up' as is told us in the beautiful description of wisdom, 'from everlasting, from the beginning or even the earth was,' or as John has it, 'The same was in the beginning with God.' The mighty God—the prophetic announcement rises as it proceeds, and declares the promised child to be 'the Mighty God.' This title was amply verified by him to whom 'all power in heaven and in earth' was given. The Psalmist, in the forty-fifth psalm, addresses one who is 'most mighty,' and as this, in the second chapter of Hebrews, is applied to 'the Son,' we may well infer the propriety of his claim as advanced by the beloved disciple in Patmos, 'I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.' The Everlasting Father—this

either signifies a father (or possessor) of eternity that is an eternal being, and such is our Redeemer, 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;' or the author and bestower of eternal life, in which sense it equally belongs to him who is 'the author of eternal salvation.' The Prince of Peace—This title is so applicable to him 'who is our peace,' and who 'made peace by the blood of his cross,' that I shall detain you no longer with this constellation of prophecy; but go on."

"Dear mother," interrupted Herbert, "will you pass over the prophecy of Immanuel in the seventh chapter of Isaiah, fourteenth verse?"

"If I had that intention," said Mrs. Lindsay, "it was not because I deemed it irrelevant to our purpose, but because our time is too short to enter into every passage of Scripture, on this subject; but as I know the text in question is a favourite of yours, we will spend a moment or two in explaining it. That the Lord Jesus is meant, by the child who was to be called Immanuel, is evident to my mind, from the fact of this very prophecy being quoted by Matthew, and applied to Christ. In fact this connexion between the two passages is so evident, that many of those who did not believe in the miraculous birth of the Saviour, have rejected the

first three chapters of Matthew as spurious. Whoever the term 'child' referred to, in the primary sense, whether Hezekiah, or Shear-Jashub, who was present at the interview with Ahaz, or some other child, real or symbolic, matters little; in its ultimate signification, we must believe that it belongs alone to him, who was 'God manifest in the flesh,' and in whom 'dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.' But the prophecy to which I particularly wish to call your attention Mabel, as affording the most striking contrast to the triumphant notes of the one we so lately considered, and as giving the most complete proof of the inspiration of holy writ, is contained in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. This we might almost suppose a narrative of the past, rather than a prediction of the future; and to show you its parallelism with the New Testament, I will read you a portion of each as they fit in together.

Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him there is no beauty that we should desire him.

He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? We have no king but Cesar.

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not.

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted.

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

All we, like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.

From custody, and from sentence, he is taken away: but who of his generation attendeth to it?* for he was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

* Dr. J. Pye Smith's Paraphrase.

Away with this man and release unto us Barrabas.

Jesus wept.

Then all the disciples forsook him and fled.

Is not this the carpenter's son?

He began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

They crucified him.

This is my body, broken for you.

Having made peace through the blood of his cross.

And they shall scourge him.

All the disciples forsook him and fled.

All ye shall be offended because of me. Who his own self bare our sins, in his own body on the tree.

Who when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he suffered, he threatened not.

And he answered him to never a word.

Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified.

Ye shall be scattered every man to his own. He bowed the head and gave up the ghost. For he hath made him to be sin for us

A grave is assigned him with the wicked, but his tomb is a rich man's, because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

He shall see of the travel of his soul and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities.

Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong: because he hath poured out his soul unto death, and he was numbered with the transgressors: and he bare the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors.

who knew no sin, the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left.

And when Joseph had taken the body he laid it in his own new tomb.

If it be possible, let this cup pass from me. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me.

Which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.

This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of openly triumphing over them in it.

If thou be Christ save thyself and us.

He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

"Thank you, dear aunt, how wonderful it seems that so many things should be foretold, so long before they happened. I wonder how the Jews can be so blind as not to see that all these predictions were fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth."

"It can only be accounted for, my dear, by that blindness of mind which was one of the punishments of their unbelief. We have been so long detained by Isaiah, that we must just glance at the other prophets."

"But, dear mother, will you not devote a word to the text in which Christ is called the Lord our Righteousness?"

"Certainly, my son. Jeremiah utters this remarkable prophecy; 'Behold the days come, saith the Lord, (Jehovah) that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely, and this is his name whereby he shall be called, Jehovah our Righteousness.' I before told you, that being called by a name, meant possessing the qualities enumerated, and that Christ did so in the most eminent degree, cannot be doubted by any who are familiar with his life and atonement; but the Apostle settles the point when he says, 'But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. This name, Jehovah, is the incommunicable title of the Deity, and being

applied to the expected Messiah, settles the question of his Divinity at once. Daniel thus speaks: 'I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.' In the ninth chapter and twenty-fourth verse, we are told that 'Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself:' indeed the whole prophecy is so clear, and received so evident an accomplishment in Christ, that I know not how any one in their senses can remain in doubt on the subject. Micah points out the very place of the Redeemer's birth. 'But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.' And Zachariah says, 'Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying; Behold, the man whose name is The Branch; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord, even he shall build the temple

of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne: and he shall be a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.' This same prophet, like Isaiah, after the exaltation foretold in the last mentioned text, changes his hand, and strikes the mournful notes that speak of betrayal, desertion, and death. 'If ye think good, give me my price, and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price, thirty pieces of silver.' 'And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn.' 'Awake, O sword against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered.' Not only was our Lord's coming thus minutely and literally predicted, but that of his forerunner, John the Baptist, was also the subject of prophecy. The conclusion of Malachi's message runs thus, 'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord.' But we must defer our consideration of the Saviour's person, work, and reward, till another evening. May what has been said excite you, my dear Mabel, to examine for yourself those Scriptures which he has himself declared to testify of him."

CHAPTER IV.

And Thomas answered and said unto him, my Lord and my God.
Who is over all, God blessed for ever.

"WHAT is the answer, Mabel, to the question, who is the Redeemer of God's elect?"

"The answer is, aunt, as follows: 'The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be, God and man, in two distinct natures, and one person for ever."

"You have, my children, often heard me extol the Shorter Catechism for its comprehensiveness, its precision, and its fulness. This question is an example of its excellence; every word seems well chosen, and either expresses a truth, or contradicts a heresy. The only Redeemer—Herbert, what is the meaning of this word."

"It signifies, mother, a kinsman, or near relation, to whom the redemption of captives, or of alienated estates belonged by custom, before the giving of the law. The act of redeeming was one in which something was bought again after it had been sold, by paying back the price to the first purchaser, Lev. xxv. 25; xxvii. 20. To deliver and bring out of bondage with a strong

hand, and without any ransom, such as were kept prisoners by their enemies, Deut. vii. 5; xxxii. 6; and thirdly, to deliver sinners from the tyranny of Satan, from sin, death, and hell, by the purchase of Christ's blood, and the power of his grace. Thus is Christ both the ransomer and ransom, Luke i. 68; Isaiah xliv. 6; 1 Peter i. 18, 19."

"A further investigation of the subject will show how well this title applies to the Saviour. The only Redeemer—'There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.' 'For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. The Lord Jesus Christ—Herbert, tell us the meaning of the word, translated *Lord*."

"I am glad mother, that you take up this title which is so significant as applied in the Scriptures. Κυριος is a Greek word, equivalent to the Hebrew Adonai, a name often applied to God the Father, and still more frequently to the Son. 'It means ruler, disposer, or basis and support.

"Yes, in the one hundred and tenth Psalm, 'Jehovah said unto my Adonai; sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.' Christ's applying this Psalm to himself, recorded by three Evangelists, is proof that he claimed this name of dignity, which is also used

in Isaiah, vi. 1, 'I saw the Adonai sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims—and one cried unto another and said, Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah Sabaoth. Then said I, woe is me—for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah Sabaoth.' This passage is applied to our Saviour by John, when he said, 'These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of Him.' Can we then wonder that our Immanuel is said to be the 'Lord of all,' or that the beloved disciple, when speaking of adverse kingdoms, declares that 'the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings.' Jesus, —Mabel, you know the meaning of that word?"

"Yes, aunt, it is the same as Joshua, and means a Saviour."

"It does, my love. Joshua was an eminent type of Him, who came 'to save his people from their sins.' This name seems to belong especially to Christ's human nature, and identifies him with us, as being one, who can 'be touched with the feeling of our infirmities,' and 'was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.' Herbert, tell us what *Christ* signifies."

"It is the same with *Messiah*, mother, and

means anointed, 'from the unction used in consecrating the high priest.'"

"This term is first used prophetically in the second psalm, applied to the Saviour, Acts iv. 25. We also read in the forty-fifth psalm, 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre: therefore,* O God, thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows;' which Paul in the Epistle to the Hebrews refers expressly to the Son. 'Who being the eternal Son.' When we approach a subject so sacred, and to our finite capacity so unsearchable, as the mode of subsistence in which the different persons of the Godhead are revealed to us, it becomes us to feel that we are standing upon holy ground. As far as the paucity of human language will permit, we find expressions in Holy Writ, denoting the most intimate relation between the Father and the Son. 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' 'And now, O Father, glorify thou with me, with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee, before the world was,' 'for thou lovedst me before the foundations of the world.' Our Lord is called 'the only begotten Son of God,' and 'his only Son,' indicating a similarity of na-

* See margin.

ture, and an identity of essence, which elevates him far above all other beings who are called sons of God in a subordinate sense. The idea that this title is official, and merely belongs to his mediatorial work, cannot be correct; else why was he spoken of as the Son, so long before his advent in the flesh. He is called the eternal Son—because 'his goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting;' or, as the margin has it, 'the days of eternity.' Again, the Holy Spirit is on all hands allowed to be eternal, 'the eternal Spirit,' Heb. ix. 14. But this same Spirit is declared to be the Spirit of the Son. 'God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts.' In the second psalm it is said, 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.' 'This day,' as has been well remarked,* 'cannot be understood as properly denoting any one of man's days either in David's time or afterwards. It can only be understood of God's day, the day of eternity; which with God is all one day, without any yesterday or to-morrow.' 'This being so highly elevated and so richly endowed, (Heb. chap. i.) became man, by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul, as the next question has it.' What heresy is this intended to expose, Herbert?"

"That of the Docetæ, mother, who held that

* Rev. Adam Gib, of Edinburgh.

our Saviour was not a man in reality, but in appearance only. Arius and others affirmed that he had a body, but not a soul, and that the Logos or his superior nature, supplied its place."

"The Unitarians, on the contrary, believe him a man but nothing more, and allege in proof of their tenets, all those passages which speak of his proper humanity; forgetting or disregarding the fact, that the advocates of his divinity hold also, that he is as really 'the Son of David,' as 'his Lord.' And so was, and continues to be, God and man, in two distinct natures and one person for ever. It is this union of the divine and human natures, which fits our Saviour for his office work as the author of our salvation. As man, he was holy, harmless, and undefiled, and separate from sinners; as God, he was mighty to save and strong to deliver. It was necessary that the Mediator should be man. 1st. That he might be related to those in behalf of whom he was to fulfil that office; that he might be our 'kinsman,' and we as it were be rendered one with him, Eph. v. 20. 2d. That reconciliation might be made for sin in the same nature which had sinned, Heb. ii. 14. 3d. It was necessary the Mediator should be man, that he might both suffer and die, Heb. ix. 11—16. 4th. It was fit that the Mediator should be man,

that he might sympathize with his people under all their trials, Heb. ii. 17, 18. 5th. It was requisite the Mediator should be a man, holy and unblemished by sin, that he might be qualified to offer himself without spot to God; take away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and be an advocate for them with the Father, Heb. iv. 14—16. 1st. It was needful that the Mediator should be God, that he might sustain and keep the human nature from sinking under the infinite wrath of God, and the power of death, Acts ii. 24: Rom. i. 4. 2d. It was needful the Mediator should be God, to give worth and efficacy to his sufferings, obedience, and intercession, Acts xx. 28: Heb. ix. 14. 3d. It was requisite that the Mediator should be God, because in the economy of redemption, all divine gifts and graces were to be treasured up in him, and by him through the agency of the Holy Spirit, to be dispensed to his people, of whom he was to be the ever-present friend, final judge, and prevalent intercessor, Matt. xxviii. 20: Eph. i. 20—23: 2 Cor. v. 10. So much has this important subject engrossed our time, that we shall have little space to devote to the work of the Saviour. This however, is more familiar to you than the arguments relative to his person. This, work is divided in the Catechism into three parts. Mabel, what are they?"

"The office of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, aunt."

"You are right. A prophet is not only one who foretells future events, but also teaches the will of God. Hence the name of Word or Logos, as applied to our Lord, by which is meant a communication, even as by language our thoughts are transmitted to others. This title was used in the proem to John's Gospel, where in language of a fulness and majesty peculiar to this Apostle, is set forth the eternity of the Son, and his co-operation with the Father in the act of creation. Previous to his appearance in the flesh, our Lord often manifested himself to the church in the character of an angel, called the Angel of the Lord, or as it might be more properly translated, the angel Jehovah. Thus Abraham saw his day and rejoiced. Thus Jacob wrestled with 'a man,' or as it is said in Hosea, 'the angel,' 'and he called the name of the place Peniel; for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.' The same glorious person was 'the angel which appeared to Moses in the bush,' and 'the angel which spake to him in the mount Sinai;' for in speaking of these very transactions we are told, (1 Cor. chap. x.) that these fathers 'drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ,' and that those

who sinned, 'tempted' Christ, who is elsewhere called the Rock of Ages. When the three youths were cast into the burning fiery furnace, a fourth was seen with them, loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and his form was 'like the Son of God.' But the prophetical office was more fully accomplished by the Saviour during his abode on earth. By his personal preaching, by the communication of his Spirit, and by the inspired revelation of his will, collected in the Scriptures, as the rule of faith and practice; he has declared to the Church in all ages, the will of God for its salvation. This character of our Lord is recognized by many who disavow him as priest and king. But so dependent are these offices on each other, that if divided, they are nugatory and incomplete. What use is a teacher to those whose consciences are hardened in sin? How can we submit to his authority, till the enmity of the human heart be removed? Or how, could we avail ourselves of the remedy of the Gospel, 'except some man guide us?' We will now glance at the priestly character of the Redeemer. One essential requisite for this part of his work, was his holiness. By means of this quality so pre-eminently possessed by him who 'is our righteousness,' an obedience was rendered to the divine law, which magnified it and made

it honourable, and thereby when imputed to his followers, gave them a ground of justification in the sight of God. Mabel, tell us what the Catechism says on this subject?"

"Aunt, Christ executes the office of a priest, in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us."

"Here is announced the great truth of the atonement, abundantly declared in Scripture; prefigured in all the types and sacrifices of the Old Testament economy; and verified by the experience of saints in all periods of the Church: for before the coming of the Mediator, the faith of his people was fixed upon a Saviour who was to come; even, as after his appearance, it rested on his death. The vicarious nature of Christ's sufferings is frequently spoken of in Scripture. 'Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself.' 'Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.' 'Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.' Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that

he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. The justice of God was approved in the punishment of sin, endured by our surety, in our stead. There is no sacrifice of his holiness, that essential attribute of his nature, but in the cross, all his perfections harmonize and meet. 'We are reconciled to God by the death of his Son;' 'the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, is blotted out, and we are delivered from the law, (*i. e.* in its condemnatory power,) that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of the spirit.' 'But Christ intercedes for his people.' We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' The seventeenth chapter of John is a specimen of this part of the Saviour's work, which is still going on in heaven; where Christ is entered, 'now to appear in the presence of God for us.'"

"How can the Romanists," exclaimed Herbert, "be so blinded, as to think that their masses or relics, or saints, can in any measure supersede the necessity of Christ's intercession in behalf of his people. To us, 'there is one Mediator between God and man,' who, by his being 'once offered,' bore the sins of many; but their mummeries come in place of the Saviour, and hide him from their view."

"I have more patience with the people than with their teachers, my son. These blind guides have made use of the inventions you spoke of, to fill their own pockets, and keep the multitude in subjection to their authority. Nor does this disposition pertain to them alone. There seems to be a growing desire to elevate the sacraments, and of course the clergy who dispense them, to an eminence never intended by their founder. But we have yet to consider Christ as the king of his people. During his stay on earth, he was divested of his essential glory. He had 'made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant;' in pursuance of this state of humiliation we find that our Lord spoke little of himself, but told his disciples that 'the Spirit of truth should glorify him,' 'for he shall receive of mine, and show it unto you.' But when he had finished the work which his Father had given him to do; his resurrection and ascension, witnessed the acceptance of his painful sacrifice, and attested the efficacy of his death. The descent of the Holy Spirit, still more powerfully corroborated the truth of his declarations; and by leading the minds of his followers 'into all truth,' made them better acquainted with his nature and character, than while he was personally present with them. His kingly office

therefore includes the reward, which, as Mediator, he was to receive; by which our nature being still united to his divinity, receives an exaltation beyond the highest conception of created minds to understand. 'Wherefore God has highly exalted him,'—the man Christ Jesus—'and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' To the glory of God the Father—mark this my children—there are no jarring notes when 'men honour the Son even as they honour the Father;' nay, the anthem which in heaven declares, 'worthy is the Lamb which is slain, to receive power, and riches, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing,' concludes with conjoining in sacred ascription, the name of 'Him who sitteth upon the throne,' 'and that of the Lamb, for ever and ever.'"

"What do you think, mother, of that passage in first Corinthians, where Christ is said to deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father?"

"I think, Herbert, that it is the Mediatorial kingdom of Christ; this, when the dispensation to which it belongs has past, will cease to be required, and then the Godhead, such is the idea

conveyed by the term *God* in the 28th verse, as it seems to me, will in its own essential glory, 'be all in all.' We must remember that the necessity for a Redeemer and Sanctifier, arose from man's sinfulness; when, therefore, the present dispensation is over, those who are admitted to heaven may be made so holy as no longer to need their days-man as a medium of access. But I need not try to elucidate a passage which has puzzled the learned in all periods. We may be sure, as I before mentioned, that there can be no danger of confusion or misrule between Him, who 'thought it no robbery to be equal with God,' and 'the Father' who 'loveth the Son, and hath put all things into his hand.' But we must defer our subject till another Sabbath evening."

CHAPTER V.

Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands, have crucified and slain.
According to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

"MABEL," said Mrs. Lindsay, as her little party were collected for their Sabbath evening conversation, "What are the decrees of God?"

"The Catechism, dear aunt, says 'The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever cometh to pass.'"

"This article of our Church, my dear children, is one which has appeared particularly obnoxious to those who hold a contrary opinion. Our faith has been called bigotry, gloom, and uncharitableness, merely because we vindicate what we believe to be a doctrine of Scripture; and the alternative is either to 'be every where spoken against,' or to shrink from the avowal of a scriptural truth, whose base is deep as eternity, and whose consequences include the everlasting welfare of 'a great multitude, that no man can number.' I concede, that on this point, great indiscretion has been used. 'Secret things belong to God,' and finite minds are lost in the greatness of the subject, when they attempt to penetrate these depths, or mount these heights of knowledge. Little then does it become us to assume a tone of superiority, if we have been led to see the truth as revealed in the Scriptures, on the doctrine in question; or to denounce those who reject it as enemies of Christ. Young Christians are often much perplexed on this ground; to such, my advice is, make sure your

interest in the plan of redemption, by coming to the Saviour, and acting faith on him, and then you may rest satisfied that your 'calling and election' has been verified 'before the world was.' In my own experience, this doctrine was the last that I received; and nothing but the force of Scripture proof could have done away with my early prejudice against it. I say this for your benefit, Mabel, that you may not feel discouraged, should you find these abstruse parts of the system above your reach. You know Bunyan speaks 'of the nuts that break the children's teeth,' and well does the simile apply, for to those who have strength to reach it, this truth is most cheering and consoling to the mind."

"You know, aunt, Milton makes it an employment of his lost spirits to sit apart

> 'In thoughts more elevate and reason high
> Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,
> Fixed fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute.'"

"He does so, and a better authority than Milton says, that 'the devils believe and tremble.' No doubt they delight in blinding—so far as permitted—men's minds to a truth so evident to themselves. But to our subject. 'No man,' a learned author tells us, 'will deny that there are divine decrees, who believes that God is an

intelligent being, and considers what this character implies.' When men plan and design for the future, they are perpetually baffled by events over which they have no control; this cannot be with the Deity, 'who knows the end from the beginning,' and to whom all things are present, in one omniscient glance. The foreknowledge of God seems essential to his very being; and if he knows all that will come to pass, can we for a moment believe that all this goodly scene of things has been created at random, without direction or aim in its founder? It will certainly be admitted that if God knows what is to happen, he can direct as well as foresee, 'for who hath resisted his will.' But his directing being the acting of infinite power, must possess an efficiency which nothing can withstand. Thus it appears a necessary part of an all-wise, all-powerful agent, to determine and select those measures, which would best comport with the promotion of his own holy purposes. He must foreordain before he could foresee; and we find the Apostle asserts this, in that golden chain of divine truth, where each link is indissolubly connected with the one preceding: 'for whom he did foreknow, he did also predestinate—moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justi-

fied; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.' And this in fact is the strong ground on which Calvinists stand, that the truths they maintain are found in Scripture. How to reconcile the foreordination of God, with accountability in the creature, is what I shall not pretend to do. We find both doctrines in the word of God, and therefore we are bound to believe them; and the difficulty lies, not in the Calvinistic system, but in the imperfection of our faculties. The Arminians rail at the dark and gloomy tenets of our faith, but their conditional decrees do not meet the difficulty; nor when they assert that Christ died for all men, do they solve the question—Why then are not all men saved? To place the decision of this question upon the creature's will, is indeed to make 'man stronger than God.'"

"Aunt, is decree a scriptural term?"

"It is not found in the New Testament at all, in the sense of the question; nor does it in the Old Testament always bear the same meaning. As if to rectify by scriptural terms, the use of one more technical, the framers of our Catechism have been careful to explain the word you speak of, by texts from the Bible, taken almost verbatim. Thus the Apostle—'in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predesti-

nated according to the purpose of him, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will;' and in the same chapter the date of this purpose is given, 'according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.' 'Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world.' 'My counsel,' says the divine speaker, 'shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.' Peter says that 'Christ was foreordained before the foundation of the world:' and in the first gospel sermon preached to the assembled multitude, this Apostle with the aflatus of the Holy Spirit fresh on his heart, and the cloven tongue of flame yet resting on his brow, feared not to promulgate the doctrine of 'the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,' as exemplified in the death of that Saviour, whom the Jews had 'taken, and by wicked hands had crucified and slain.' Here you see the very event which was foreordained to happen by God, is still viewed as entailing guilt and condemnation on those who were its perpetrators; according to my previous remark, that the predestination of the Creator does not interfere with the creature's responsibility. To the same purpose our Lord declares, 'the Son of Man goeth, as it is written of him; but wo unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed!

it had been good for that man if he had not been born.' The decrees of God are, in our Confession of Faith, defended from the imputations that God is the author of sin; that violence is offered to the will of the creature, or that the contingency of second causes is taken away. Herbert, what is the name given to those decrees which relate to God's intelligent creatures?"

"Predestination, mother. This title is applicable indeed, to all the purposes of God, which determine beforehand what is to come to pass; but it is usually limited to those which refer to the spiritual and eternal state of man."

"Right, my son. Predestination includes the decrees of election. Election is the choice which God in the exercise of sovereign grace, has made of certain individuals, to enjoy salvation by Jesus Christ. This the Scriptures teach us in those passages which speak of the elect, as 'chosen in Christ,' 'chosen to salvation,' 'predestinated to the adoption of sons,' and 'to be conformed to the image of God's Son,' as 'elect according to the foreknowledge of God,' as 'vessels of mercy whom he hath before prepared unto glory.' These persons were 'chosen from all eternity.' 'We are bound,' says Paul, 'to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the

beginning, chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.' And again, 'He hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which were given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.' These passages prove also that predestination does not proceed upon the ground of their foreseen qualifications.' Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy hath he saved us.' Even so at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace: and if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace."

"But dear aunt, I thought faith and holiness were always united in the doctrine of election, as in this passage, 'according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.'"

"Far be it from me, my dear, to sever what God hath joined together. I only mean that faith and holiness, so far from being the cause of our election—as asserted by the advocates of conditional decrees—are the effect of it. It is the sovereign grace of God, which makes his children to differ from the 'children of wrath,'

and to his name be the praise! The purpose of God respecting his elect is immutable. This is denied by those who think that a man may be a child of God to-day, and fall from grace to-morrow; but a tenet so unconsolatory, is not founded on the Bible. There we read, that 'the foundation of the Lord standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his.' And our Saviour says to his Father, concerning his disciples, 'Thine they were, and thou gavest them me; those thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost; but the son of perdition is lost, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.' The mediation of Christ was the expedient by which God's purposes were executed. Election being the purpose of God, cannot be known till manifested in its accomplishment. The Book of Life is a sealed book, which no mortal can open, and the only way by which we can ascertain our acceptance, is 'to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure;' that is, to discover that we have been converted to God, and thus our election will be manifested to ourselves."

"Aunt, what is meant by reprobation?"

"It is a term, my dear, which is generally understood to mean the purpose of God to leave the wicked to the consequences of their sins, by not affording them the grace necessary to salva-

tion. The Deity does not reprobate men by making them wicked, but by not granting them the benefits of his gratuitous mercy.

"We shall better recognize the true position, in which man stands with his Maker, if we remember his absolute sovereignty, which admits no question or dispute with his creatures 'for who hath resisted his will!' his boundless might which no finite power can repel, 'he doeth his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?' his unsearchable wisdom which is so far beyond our ken; for who can 'by searching find out God?' who can 'find out the Almighty unto perfection?' and his unshrinking rectitude which knows not the shadow of turning, 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' A consideration of these perfections should make us feel that we have no right to scan the Almighty, or accuse him of cruelty, if in the language of the Confession of Faith—The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious

justice.' Such is the view the Apostle takes of this awful subject. 'Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say unto him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? What, if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory?'"

"I think, mother, that prophecy is another proof of the truth of predestination. Some events must have been certain, or they would not have been predicted by the Spirit of truth."

"Assuredly, my son. We may remark also that the judgment of the great day will not proceed on the grounds of God's decrees, but on those of 'the things done in the body.' 'Secret things belong to the Lord our God,' only those which are revealed, to us and to our children.' We ought therefore not to let the dread of being predestined to evil, interfere with seeking the salvation of our souls. In this world, while we act as freely as if there were no decree, our deeds are as infallibly foreknown as if there were no liberty."

"Have not many persons, aunt, been almost

reduced to despair by fears that they were not amongst the number of the elect?"

"This doctrine, my dear, has doubtless caused great alarm to many. Sometimes perhaps, from the injudicious ways of handling it by its friends; or from the artifices of that 'father of lies,' who loves to pervert the truth. But to those who dread God's displeasure on account of sin, and therefore fear that they will receive condemnation, there is this encouragement; that they whom God 'gave' over to a reprobate mind, are expressly said to be 'filled with all unrighteousness,' whereas the characters you speak of, are greatly and chiefly distressed at their departures from holiness, and long earnestly to keep God's precepts diligently. It is objected to predestination, that it supersedes the use of means; but the predestination for which we contend, is a purpose that embraces means and ends, fixes the means as surely as the ends; and so connects them, that without the former, the latter cannot take place. Look at the natural world, and it will furnish an illustration of my meaning. Should the farmer loiter at home, and neither plough nor sow, saying, 'if I am to have a crop, I shall have one, whether I take steps for it or not;' we should at once see his folly. True, all his labour would be vain, did

not the Lord 'give us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons;' but the most genial influences would fail, if the means necessary to success were not employed. So is it in the spiritual world. The real discouragement is the indisposition of the heart, which seeks to make excuses for its own remissness in duty. Were God unwilling that men should 'strive to enter in at the strait gate;' had he discountenanced our efforts, had he established no means of grace, or had those means when perseveringly used, failed in receiving his blessing, there would indeed be cause for discouragement. But the reverse of all this is the case—he invites all to come to the Redeemer, whom he has 'exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins;" he says in his word, 'ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.' Nor will this offer prove a mere quibble, or evasion; it is the truth of God, who cannot lie; and 'whosoever cometh unto him, he will in no wise cast out.' In the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, the Apostle enumerates the 'spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy

and without blame before him in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.' Here we see the importance of personal holiness in those who aspire to 'the adoption of children;' and this lesson is inculcated in almost every passage which we find upon the doctrine in question. 'For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them,' 'to present you holy and unblameable, and unreproveable in his sight,' 'for whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate, to be conformed to the image of his Son.' There is one consideration which we must ever keep in view, while dwelling on these amazing and unexplorable subjects; and that is one which is taught us in the Shorter Catechism, 'his own glory.' This is what the Deity intends to promote in his dealings with his creatures. Even the wicked are compelled to show forth his praises in their condemnation, for we are told that 'the Lord hath made all things for himself, yea even the wicked for the day of evil,' and that 'the wrath of man shall praise him,' while 'the remainder of wrath he will restrain.'

How shall we conclude this part of our subject better, than in the words of one who ever acquiesced in the Divine will—'Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.'"

CHAPTER VI.

And the Spirit of God, moved upon the face of the waters baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

"THE next point which will occupy our attention," said Mrs. Lindsay, as the little group collected as usual for their evening employment, "is the application of the salvation wrought out by Jesus Christ for his people. For you will perceive, Mabel, that man in his state of enmity to God, neither feels his danger, nor appreciates the remedy. What is the answer to the question, 'how are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?'"

"We are made partakers, aunt, of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us by his Holy Spirit."

"Here we are told that the Spirit of God, is the agent by whom we come to partake in the blessings of the new covenant; let us therefore inquire into his nature and properties. It is not with the Holy Ghost as it was with the person

of the Saviour. His divinity, in the present day is unquestioned, but his personality has been attacked; and he has been degraded into a mere attribute of the Father. This supposition is alike contrary to Scripture and common sense. Our Lord told his disciples, that 'all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven.' If an attribute merely be intended, this is a strange expenditure of language; but if the Holy Ghost be a divine person, it would seem probable that if any sin is incapable of being forgiven, it would be the one ascribing such wonderful miracles as that mentioned in the context, to the power of Beelzebub. Again, Peter said to Ananias, 'why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie unto the Holy Ghost?' 'thou hast not lied unto men,' not to an attribute, 'but unto God.' Surely the fearful punishment of this offender, and his participating partner in crime, shows that the Power whom they had offended was as mighty to punish then, as when he was employed to 'garnish the heavens,' or to brood upon the waters of primeval chaos. Besides, in the Bible, we find the qualities and actions of a person are ascribed to the Spirit; thus he is said to strive—to be sent forth—to know—to speak—to guide—to lead—to help—

to testify—to reveal—to search—to prophecy—to intercede—to give gifts—to work in the mind of man—to work miracles—to sanctify—to quicken or give life—to be vexed—to be provoked—to be resisted and to be grieved. Can it be of a mere attribute that these things are declared? But if language has any force, this point is settled by the appearance of the Holy Ghost, in 'a bodily shape like a dove,' upon Jesus at his baptism by John, while a voice from heaven saying, 'This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased,' attested the solemnity of the scene. Is it possible that at this important juncture in the history of our Saviour, a mere attribute should be sent in a guise so like personality, with no object that we can discover, but to puzzle and mislead the minds of men, as to its place in the economy of salvation.

"Then, if we consult John's Gospel, chapters fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth, we shall find the Redeemer cheering the minds of his disciples in the prospect of his death, with the coming of 'the Comforter,' as the Holy Spirit is called. He even tells them that it is expedient for them that he should go away, for if he went not away 'the Comforter would not come.' Can we believe that the Saviour would have recourse to so pitiful an evasion as to pro-

pose a mere quality or attribute to console his sorrowing followers for his ignominious death? The Holy Ghost thus promised, came on the day of Pentecost, when suddenly there was 'a a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting;' and his mighty influences must have been apparent when the disciples 'began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance,' even to those who saw not 'the cloven tongues like as of fire that sat upon them.' The transformation of the poor timid band who fled in their Master's extremity, to the heroic company, that with manly tone brought home the crime of Jesus' crucifixion to the hearts of the conscience-stricken multitude; and still more the fruits of their preaching, consisting of three thousand souls converted to God, bear witness to the efficiency of the agent, who thus asserted his might. But an argument still stronger than any I have adduced, seems to me to be found in the baptismal formula. This instruction was given to his disciples by our Lord, after his resurrection, and just before his ascension; and is alike important, from its being the initiatory rite of the new dispensation, and from the fact that it contains the last command of him 'to whom all power was given,'

to his believing disciples. Now no man will deny that the Father and the Son are distinct persons—even those who doubt the Saviour's divinity, grant this, what confusion then would it not cause to add to them, and join equally with them, as to all the concerns of our faith and obedience, the Holy Spirit; if he be not a divine person even as they?"

"Besides, mother, you know we are baptized into His name. How can this be without we are to own him equally with the Father, and the Son, in all our divine worship, faith, and obedience?"

"Indeed, my son, I see no other sense in which the injunction can be understood, than as claiming for the 'Eternal Spirit' a full participation in all the love, homage, and subjection which the Father and the Son have a right to demand. Else why include him in that name, which alone belongs to the Godhead. And now my children this seems a proper place to say something on the subject of God's mode of existence in three persons, yet one essence. Mabel, what says the Catechism?"

"In answer to the question, How many persons are there in the Godhead, aunt, it tells us that There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these

three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory."

"We seem to have been ascending step by step, my children, till we have reached the highest point to which poor human intellect can rise. May we be enabled to speak and think on this mighty theme as becomes those who in comparison with their Maker 'are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.' It is evident that all we know on the subject in hand, must be by revelation solely, and if the arguments for the divinity of the Son and the personality of the Spirit have been conclusive, they of themselves establish the doctrine of the Trinity."

"Aunt, is that word found in the Bible?"

"It is not, my dear. Herbert will tell us its meaning, and when it was first used."

"This word, mother, is from the Latin, and signifies three in one. Some writers think it was first used in a synod which met at Alexandria in the year 317; but others assign to it an earlier date, and ascribe it to Theophilus of Antioch, who flourished about the year 162."

"This expression, as well as the truth it conveys, has been the occasion of many irreverential sneers and much idle opposition. The leveling principle is so strong in man, that he would fain bring down the most sacred arcana of divine

knowledge, to the measure of his own finite capacity, and because he cannot comprehend how it is that the Godhead subsists in three persons and yet is 'one Jehovah,' would reject the doctrine as contradictory or impossible. To the Scriptures we must look for light on this point, and if here revealed, let us hold it fast; even though accounted among the foolish, the weak, the base, and the despised. Herbert tell your cousin about the plural Hebrew names of the Deity used in the Old Testament."

"I will, mother. The fact of the name of God Elohim, (literally the Gods) being construed with a singular verb has been considered a strong proof of the trinity, nor is this idiom confined to this word only. 'Thy Makers is thy husband.' 'Remember thy Creators in the days of thy youth.'"

"This form of expression, my children, is used in the first chapter of Genesis, first verse; and it receives a striking explanation from the fact, that the act of creation is ascribed to each of the other persons of the Godhead, in connexion with the Father. 'God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;'

'for by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible.' 'Thou sendest forth thy Spirit and they are created.' 'The Spirit of God made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.' And in Psalm xxxiii. 6, we have this remarkable announcement: 'By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made; and all the host of them, by the breath of his mouth,'—which the preceding text shows to be equivalent to the Spirit of God. On this hypothesis, the words used at the creation of man, 'Let us make man in our image after our likeness;' and those after the fall, 'Behold man is become as one of us,' are easily explained; as also the language employed in reference to Babel, 'Go to, let us go down.' When antediluvian wickedness was at its height, the Deity is represented as saying, 'my Spirit shall not always strive with man;' and Isaiah declares that the children of Israel, 'vexed his holy Spirit,' while Nehemiah, in his account of the fasting of the returned exiles, confesses, 'yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy Spirit, in the prophets.' But Isaiah contains a passage which gives us an account of the three persons of the Godhead, distinctly mentioned. 'Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in

secret from the beginning; from the time that it was then am I; and now the Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me.' Here it is evident that the speaker is divine, and the resemblance to the description of Wisdom, (Prov. viii. 17,) is most striking: besides the sent of God we know to be Christ, who came from his Father, and was anointed to his prophetical office by the Holy Spirit. 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me.' Again, the Father, Son and Spirit, are named in the following passage; 'when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord.' It is also said, 'for the Lord said, Surely they are my people—in all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them. But they rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit.' Here the name Lord or Jehovah, seems to refer to the Father—the Angel of his presence we have elsewhere seen, is the Son—and the Holy Spirit is represented as being vexed at the conduct of the Israelites. But it is in the New Testament that this doctrine is more clearly revealed."

"Yes, aunt, you know at the baptism of our Saviour, when the Holy Ghost appeared like a

dove, there was a voice from heaven saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' Was not this a wonderful manifestation of the Three Persons in the Godhead?"

"It was indeed, my dear, and has additional weight given it by the directions given by our Lord in regard to baptism to his disciples, where the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost—not names—is that in which the ordinance is to be administered. The apostolic blessing is couched in similar terms: 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all, Amen.' Nor are these the only instances in which the Father, Son and Spirit are associated together. 'Through him (Christ,) we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.' 'There is one body and one Spirit, one Lord, (in the New Testament this title is peculiarly given to the Son,) one God and Father of all.' 'How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God?' 'Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, with obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.'"

"You do not mention, my dear mother, the

famous text, 1 John v. 7, 'There are three that bear record in heaven.'"

"I have not Herbert, nor am I prepared to do justice to a subject on which so much learning and research have been expended—I mean the authenticity of this passage. It is perhaps, more in your line to consider the pros and cons, by which the argument on both sides is sustained. For our present purpose, a few remarks must suffice. Whether the verse in question was expunged by the Arians, omitted by negligent transcribers, or interpolated by the orthodox, are questions which it seems difficult to decide; and in the present state of the external evidence on this point, though by no means conceding that fresh light from the many uncollated manuscripts may not change the aspect of the case, it must be owned, that numbers are contrary to its authenticity. The internal evidence however, is quite the reverse. I do not speak of the grammatical structure of the original Greek; nor of the doctrine of the Greek article, so ably illustrrted by Bishop Middleton; but of the passage as compared with other Scripture declarations, let us examine it for a moment. In heaven, are three that bear witness."

"Thank you, aunt, for your transposing the sentence; for before, I had an idea that the bearing

record was transacted in heaven, and it puzzled me sadly."

"That does not seem the meaning of the passage at all; but rather that heaven was the abode of the first witnesses, as earth is the scene of the second train mentioned in the eighth verse. No one can doubt that God the Father is in heaven, who recalls the prayer first taught at his mother's knee: 'the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father' must be there also; and of 'the Son of man,' even when his bodily form was on earth, he himself said, 'which is in heaven.' So as to their bearing record to Christ's being the Messiah—the Father bare record by audible voices, by the miracles wrought by Christ, (John xi. 41,) and by his resurrection from the dead. The Son bare record to the same truth by appearing to Stephen, and Saul of Tarsus, but chiefly by fulfilling his promise of the miraculous descent of the Holy Ghost. And the Spirit bare record by the prophetic announcements of Simeon and Anna, by his appearance at Christ's baptism, and by his Pentecostal illumination of the Apostles at Jerusalem. That these three are one—not only in consent, but in nature, must be owned by those who believe our Saviour's declaration, 'I and the Father are one.' 'The man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of

Hosts.' 'The Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth.' 'All things that the Father hath are mine.' 'That they all may be one; as thou Father art in me, and I in thee.' That the Spirit was united to the Father and the Son is also told us. 'But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father shall send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have taught you." One more passage shall conclude this evening's exercise, which I shall premise by saying, that 'the seven spirits' spoken of by John in Apocalyptic vision, is no doubt a Hebraism, to denote the Holy Spirit; seven being a number of great significance, and symbolic meaning. 'Grace and peace from him which is, and which was, and which is to come, and from the seven spirits, which are before the throne, and from Jesus Christ who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever! Amen.'"

CHAPTER VII.

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.
Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

"Do you know aunt," said Mabel, as she seated herself in her favourite corner, on the ensuing Sabbath evening, "that these conversations make me feel solemn through the week, and when any foolish thoughts rise in my mind, they seem so inappropriate, that I turn from them with disgust."

"I am glad, my love, to hear that the exhibition of divine truth, even weak and unworthy of its subject as it is, has such an effect on your mind. May their sentiments be abiding. We are now to consider the work of the Spirit in regenerating the heart, and renewing the mind of the sinner. Mabel, how doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?"

"The Spirit, aunt, applieth to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ, in our effectual calling."

"We must remember the depraved state of mankind by nature, before we can appreciate the work effected by Divine grace. 'Having

the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart,' says the apostle, describing the Gentiles, and he goes on: 'Are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.' From this lamentable condition, to a state of acceptance and favour with God, a change both relative and real is required. Redemption must be applied, and that by the Holy Spirit. Let us first examine what is the calling spoken of in the answer to this question. By divines, there is a distinction made between the external and the inward or effectual calling. The first, is that spoken of by our Lord, 'for many be called, but few chosen.' The calls of the gospel are universal, wherever it is preached:—'Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men.' 'The Spirit and the bride say, come. And let him that heareth say, come. And let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.' These calls of mercy, though made with faithfulness, and reiterated again and again, are too often disregarded. Sinners turn a deaf ear to all the persuasions and warnings of the ministers of Christ, and will not come to him that they might have

life.' But effectual calling is always invincible, because the energy exerted is that of the Spirit. Herbert give us a definition of the term."

"'Effectual calling, mother, is that work by which those who are chosen by God, and redeemed by Christ, are sweetly invited, and actually brought from a state of sin, to a state of communion with God in Christ, both externally and internally.' There is an objection made to the word invincible, as applied to the grace of God, on the ground that it excludes the liberty of the will; of this you are well aware."

"I am, my son; but neither you nor I would be willing to surrender this truth, because man impugns it. The difficulty made, originates in a misapprehension of the mode of operation. 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power,' as the hundred and tenth Psalm declares. The mind is enlightened, the will renewed, and the subject of this gracious work after being convicted of sin, is persuaded and enabled to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered in the gospel."

"Aunt, how am I to distinguish between conversion and regeneration? Are they both the same?"

"Not exactly, my dear, though they are always found in the experience of the Christian. Regeneration is a change effected by Divine

grace, in the state of the soul; the supernatural renovation of its faculties; the infusion of a principle of spiritual life. Conversion is the turning of the heart to God, and is expressed by our seeking the Lord, our coming to him, our forsaking our evil ways, and returning to God. It obviously implies the exercise of repentance and faith, the love of God, and the choice of his service. Regeneration constitutes the sinner a new creature; it is called a new birth, and is in fact a spiritual change, the transformation of the soul into the image of God. But this change, though real, is not always apparent. As at the natural birth, some children are more vigorous, and possess more of the actings of life, so is it in regeneration. Hence often are Christians unable to fix the time when they were 'made free from the law of sin and death;' while in others, the transition is so marked, that they can exclaim with confidence, 'One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.'"

"I think it must be so pleasant, aunt, to be able to mark the time of one's change so definitely."

"We are told, Mabel, that 'there are diversities of operations,' but it is the same God which worketh all in all; and we find an almost endless variety in the process by which the vital

union is effected. Some, to keep up our Lord's metaphor of 'the wind that bloweth where it listeth,' are borne down by the fierce blasts of conviction, the horror of hell, and the vivid sense of the Divine holiness, as a consuming fire to the sinner. Others are led by the gentle breezes and sweet influences of the Paraclete to that Saviour, 'whose blood cleanseth from all iniquity.' But whatever be the mode of the Spirit's work, we have an infallible test given us by Christ, by which our interest in him, and union to him, may be tested and ascertained. 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' These are thus enumerated by the Apostle. 'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance;' who sums up all with this forcible declaration, 'If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.' As if he had said, 'If we profess to have the spiritual life of a believer, let us show the actings of it by our holy conduct, and the possession of the Christian graces before mentioned.' On the other hand, if we assume that we have been regenerated, because we have partaken of rites or ceremonies, however significant, we make as great a mistake, as if we brought the choicest viands to an inanimate corpse, and called it a living being."

"What would the advocates of baptismal regeneration think of your comparison, mother?"

"Quite as highly, my son, as I think of their misapprehension of the ordinance in question. This opinion substitutes an outward visible sign for the inward spiritual change, and hence gives a false security which has the most pernicious effects. Simon Magus had been baptized, yet was he pronounced to have 'neither part nor lot in this matter,' and to be 'in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity;' and if the life and conversation are those of a worldling, all pretensions arising merely from external observances, are futile and vain. Thus our Confession of Faith declares, 'although it be a great sin to contemn or neglect this ordinance, yet grace and salvation are not so inseparately annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it, or that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated.'"

"But aunt, does not our Lord tell Nicodemus, 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God?'"

"He does so, and we will therefore inquire into his meaning. At the first and third repetition of this strongly asseverated truth, the Saviour does not mention water at all; and when

he conjoins it with the Spirit, we must remember how often this metaphor is used to express the influences of the Holy Ghost. Especially in the Old Testament this figure occurs. God, speaking by the mouth of Isaiah, says, 'I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring;' and by Ezekiel, also tells us, 'Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes.'

"As I understand the Saviour's declaration, it means, that as baptism is absolutely necessary to our admission to the visible church, so regeneration only will secure our participation in his invisible kingdom. Because, although baptism is a symbol of this affusion of the Spirit, yet baptism neither ensures nor proves regeneration. Where we are told, 'He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved,' it is added, 'but he that believeth not shall be damned:' plainly showing that, however important in its place, baptism is not essential to our salvation. Besides, how can water baptism signify regeneration, when adults in the Scriptures are required to believe, antecedently to their receiving this rite?

As in the case of Cornelius and 'his kinsmen, and near friends,' when Peter asks, 'Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?'"

"Surely Paul would not have thanked God, that he had baptized none of the Corinthians, but Crispus and Gaius, if the ordinance were the infallible and inseparable proof of their being 'renewed in the spirit of their minds.'"

"But, mother, you know it is asserted, that regeneration may actually be conveyed to the souls of the baptized, and yet its influence be lost, by their falling from grace, or because they have not been confirmed by a bishop."

"Take care, Herbert, lest your cousin should suppose these objections are your real sentiments. We both believe in the perseverance of the saints as a precious security against apostacy, in those who have known the grace of God, and had it shed abroad in their hearts. As to confirmation by a Diocesan, it is nowhere inculcated in the Scriptures, as necessary to the continuance of mankind in holiness; nor as an ordinance of the Christian Church in any sense."

"Dear mother, you know I only start difficulties that I may hear your explanation of them,

and I think Mabel is not likely to turn Puseyite on our hands; at least while she attaches so much importance to your arguments. It seems very evident, that Paul in saying, 'for Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel,' means, not to undervalue baptism, but to declare the supreme importance of preaching the gospel, as that exhibition of divine truth which Christ declared shall make free and sanctify his people. Thus James—'Of his own will begat he us with the Word of truth;' and Peter declares of believers, 'Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God.'"

"Yes, my son, this is the great mean for converting sinners and bringing them 'from darkness into light.' Under this the Lord opened the heart of Lydia, 'that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul:' and this has been blessed to the salvation of hundreds and thousands, by the agency of the accompanying Spirit of holiness."

"Having now considered this divine Agent, as the Person whose office it is to apply the benefits of redemption, we will on next Sabbath attend to the mode by which it is accomplished."

CHAPTER VIII.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. Without me ye can do nothing.

"The application of redemption," said Mrs. Lindsay, at the usual time of holding her conversations with her son and niece, "commences with the call of God, by which sinners are brought from a state of nature to a state of grace. The corruption of our nature renders the external call by the gospel ineffectual, till the internal call of the Spirit persuades and enables us to comply. All this comes from the free favour of Jehovah, 'for by grace ye are saved through faith; and that not by yourselves: it is the gift of God.' The first effect of Divine power in the new creation, is to enlighten the mind. The sinner beholds his own character and state, becomes sensible of his guilt, danger and wretchedness; and is thus led into 'the knowledge of the love, and grace, and mercy of God, and an acquaintance with Christ, his substitution, righteousness, and fulness:' as it is said, 'ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.' The next step is the renovation of the will. The affections are called forth in a way never before experienced. The revelation of the Saviour, in

his righteousness and grace, accompanied as it is with a heartfelt sense of guilt, and wretchedness, and helplessness, gives rise to faith, that act by which the soul receives the offered salvation, trusts in Christ for acceptance with God, and finds peace, and hope, and joy, in the contemplation of his character and work. Herbert, will you define repentance."

"'Repentance unto life,' mother, 'is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavour after new obedience.'"

"In this definition, my children, you see the difference between legal and evangelical repentance. The one is 'the sorrow of the world, which worketh death;' the other is unto life; and includes not only confessing our sins, but forsaking them likewise. Regeneration is not reformation; but reformation always attends regeneration. Some may not have the grosser sins to lament in their past experience; but all have that enmity of heart which must be taken away, that idolatry of self which must be dethroned. We are told in the answer given by Mabel, last Sabbath evening, that 'we are united to Christ in our effectual calling.' This union is shadowed

forth in the word of God under many emblems. The vine and its branches, the head and the members, the building and its foundation, the bridegroom and his spouse, all presuppose the closest union; but as if earthly images failed to represent this tender relation, our Saviour calls in the aid of heavenly mysteries, and prays that his people may be one, as the Father was in him, and he in the Father, that they might be one in 'fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.' The bond of this union between Christ and his people is the Spirit; but as it is mutual, something on their part is wanted to complete it, and this is faith. Mabel, what is saving faith?"

"'Faith' in Jesus Christ, aunt, 'is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel.'"

"This quality is a fruit of the Spirit of regeneration, and although the soul which he has quickened begins immediately to exert itself in all the actings of spiritual life, yet faith is eminently entitled to attention; because it receives Christ, and has a direct and powerful influence upon our peace, and comfort, and sanctification."

"Faith comprehends the knowledge of the mystery of God and of Christ, in the light of

grace, and the truth of this mystery the believer owns with full assent of mind, on the authority of the testimony of God. In this truth he exults; ardently desires communion with Christ, and when the Saviour is offered to him by the word and Spirit, receives him with delight, glorying that Christ is now his own, and seeking to manifest that union by holy actings of soul, and by living as one that is 'renewed in the Spirit of his mind.'"

"For that faith alone is efficacious 'which worketh by love' and 'purifies the heart.' Nor must we consider faith a meritorious act, on the part of the sinner—it is like reaching forth the hand to receive the blessings of the new covenant; but the power to do so, belongs to a higher origin than the mere volition of the recipient. Faith is 'the gift of God.' Faith also implies the renunciation of our own righteousness, as a foundation for our hope. 'To him that worketh,' says Paul, 'the reward is not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.' In this sense it is well said, that the believer does not work that he might live, but lives that he might work. Disclaiming all hopes of justification by the deeds of the law, he desires to show by his good

works, that 'Christ is in his heart, the hope of glory.'"

"What is your opinion, mother, about assurance being of the essence of faith?"

"Before I can answer that question, Herbert, we must settle what assurance means. If you understand by it, a full persuasion of the Divine testimony, whatever subject it relate to, I reply that it is essential to faith: but if it imply an explicit assurance of our own salvation, I deny that it is of such vital importance. How many persons have been all their lives doubting and fearing, who in the judgment of charity gave more evidence of a state of grace, than others who had much stronger expectations of acceptance and favour with God."

"Yet surely, aunt, it is not a Christian's duty to be contented with such uncertainity in a question of so much importance."

"Far from it, my dear; 'let us draw near,' the Apostle says, 'with a true heart, in full assurance of faith.' In another place he tells us, 'Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your ownselves. Know ye not your ownselves, how that Jesus Christ is in you except ye be reprobates?' The metaphor here used, is borrowed from the process of assaying metals, where those which are alloyed or im-

pure are rejected. If then it is of importance that our bullion should not be adulterated, how much more should we seek 'the trial of our faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth?' I cannot but think, that there is much criminal negligence on this subject among Christians; and fear that many sit down contentedly in suspense, about their title to a heavenly inheritance, who would soon sift out the truth if it were a question of an earthly possession."

"And how would it be possible to solve the difficulty, aunt?"

"Inquire what is the dominant feeling of the mind. If delight in God's services, self-denial for the cause of Christ, communion with our Maker in prayer, and all the other ordinances of his Church, are our delight and our chief aim, then may we hope that we have 'the Spirit of Christ,' without which, 'we are none of his:' and as John has said, 'This commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God loveth his brother also:' so it will assist us in the process of self-examination, if we find that our conduct to our neighbour, in the widest sense of the term, is regulated by the law of love. But we must pass on to the benefits of regeneration. What are these as enumerated by our form of sound

words, Mabel, or rather what is the first mentioned? for we will glance at each in succession."

"Aunt, they that are effectually called, do in this life, partake of justification—"

"Herbert will tell us what that is."

"I will, mother; in the words of the same compendium of divine truth. 'Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.'"

"This doctrine, my dear children, may well be called the keystone of the Reformation. The mind of Luther was brought to bear upon the perversions and abuses of the practice of indulgences, granted by the Papal See; by which a rate was fixed for the pardon of sin, and our 'Father's house' was made 'a house of merchandize.' Herbert tell your cousin how Tetzel and his minions performed their work."

"D'Aubigné's description of their arrival in the cities they visited is so graphic, mother, that I will give it you verbatim. 'A great agitation reigned at that time among the people of Germany. The Church had opened a vast market on the earth. Judging from the crowd of buyers and the noise and jests of the dealers, we might call it a fair; but a fair held by monks. The

merchandize they extolled, offering it at a reduced price, was, said they, the salvation of souls. The dealers passed through the country in a gay carriage, escorted by their horsemen, in great state and spending freely. One might have thought it some dignitary on a royal progress, with his attendants and officers, and not a common dealer, or a begging monk. When the procession approached a town, a messenger waited on the magistrate: 'The grace of God and of the Holy Father is at your gates!' said the envoy. Instantly everything was in motion in the place. The clergy, the priests, the nuns, the council, the schoolmasters, the traders, with their flags; men and women, young and old, went forth to meet the merchants, with lighted tapers in their hands, advancing to the sound of music, and of all the bells of the place; 'so that,' says an historian, 'they could not have given a grander welcome to God himself.' Salutations being exchanged, the whole procession moved toward the church. The pontiff's bull of grace was borne in front, on a velvet cushion, or on cloth of gold. The chief vender of indulgences followed, supporting a large red wooden cross; and the whole procession moved in this manner, amidst singing, prayers, and the smoke of incense. The sound of organs, and a concert of

instruments, received the monkish dealer and his attendants into the church. The cross he bore with him was erected in front of the altar: on it was hung the Pope's arms; and as long as it remained there, the clergy of the place, the penitentiaries, and the sub-commissioners, with white wands in their hands, came every day after vespers, or before the salutation, to do homage to it.

"'Their mode of procedure afterwards may be guessed from this commencement. Tetzel declared, that his cross had as much efficacy as the cross of Jesus Christ: that no sin was too great to be paid for; and that repentance was not indispensable. Thus did Leo and his emissaries, by this shameless traffic, prepare the way for the Reformation; and thus did the glorious truth, that 'a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law, prove mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds,' and release multitudes from the spiritual bondage of the Romish hierarchy.'"

"Justification" said Mrs. Herbert, "is a point which must ever hold a prominent place in a system of theology, because it is the method by which the sinner is restored to the favour of God. Herbert how is it derived?"

"It comes from the Latin, mother; and is a

forensic, or law term. It signifies making a person just, or rather accounting him so: and therefore does not denote a change in his disposition, but a change of state in relation to the law."

"From the definition of the Catechism," said Mrs. Herbert, "we see that justification means much more than pardon. It comprehends also, our acceptance as righteous in the sight of God. Thus the poor sinner is not only freed from the law as a broken covenant, but 'accepted in the beloved.' For it is only through the righteousness of Christ that we obtain these privileges. By this we understand his obedience, both active and passive. The first was manifested in the holiness of his life, and his perfect conformity to the whole law of God, in thought, word, and action, without failing in it, either in kind or in degree; the latter, in his submission to the curse of the law, in his satisfaction for sin, and his enduring all that wrath which was due to his people for their rebellion against God, and the dishonour which was thereby done to Jehovah. Scripture is very full on this head. 'As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.' 'He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the

righteousness of God in him.' This righteousness is received by faith alone, for it 'is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe.' What error is sometimes broached, as regards the date of our justification, Herbert?"

"The Sandemanians and others, mother, hold to eternal justification; in opposition to whom, our Confession tells us, 'God did, from all eternity, decree to justify all the elect; and Christ did, in the fulness of time, die for their sins, and rise again for their justification: nevertheless they are not justified, until the Holy Spirit doth, in due time, actually apply Christ unto them."

"What is the next item in the lists of benefits, Mabel?"

"Adoption, aunt."

"What is adoption, Herbert?"

"Adoption, mother, is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God."

"In speaking of adoption, Mabel, as an act of God, we must remember that it is virtually the same as justification; and it differs from it only as it gives a new view of the relation of believers to God, and exhibits the blessings to which they are entitled, in a peculiar form. Like justifica-

tion, it is called an act, because it is complete at once, and not carried on by degrees, thus differing from sanctification which is progressive, and sometimes slow. What was the mode of adoption practised by the Romans, Herbert?"

"To adopt a person, mother, was to take him in the room of a son, and to give him a right to all the privileges belonging to that title. This transaction was made a public concern; and the man who wished to adopt another, was obliged to draw up his reasons, and offer them to the College of the Pontifices for their approbation. This obtained, the Consul, or some other prime magistrate, brought in a bill at the Comitia Curiata, to make the process binding. The private ceremony consisted in buying the person to be adopted, of his parents, for such a sum of money, formally given and taken. When the parties appeared before the prætor, the intended father said, 'Art thou willing to become my son?' to which the answer was, 'I am willing.' The relation thus formed, was according to law; and the adopted son entered into the family of his new father, assumed his name, became subject to his authority, and was entitled to his inheritance, or if there were sons, to a share with them."

"How appropriate to all this, Herbert, is the

declaration of John: 'Beloved now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' And that of Paul, 'God sent forth his Son to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.' Many are the privileges attending on those who are spiritually adopted! God is a Father to them—they receive the Spirit of adoption—their heavenly Father provides for all their wants—subjects them to his paternal discipline—and will finally bestow on them an eternal inheritance. What is sanctification, Mabel—our next particular in the enumeration of blessings?"

"Sanctification, aunt, is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man in the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness."

"This work is more especially produced in the mind by the Holy Spirit. 'And such were some of you:' says the Apostle, referring to the unrighteous among the Corinthians, 'but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified by the Spirit of our God.' In sanctification we are made holy by the infusion of his grace, which purifies us from the pollution of sin, and

changes us 'into the same image (of the glory of the Lord) from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' Justification differs from sanctification in its order, preceding it in the mind; for the sinner is pardoned and restored to favour, before he is renewed after the image of God: in its object, for while the first takes away our liability to punishment, the second cleanses us from the pollution of sin: and in its form, as the one is a judicial act, by which we are pronounced righteous, while the other is a series of moral acts, by which a change is effected in the qualities of the soul. Herbert, how do you distinguish sanctification from regeneration?"

"The difference between regeneration and sanctification, mother, is not like that you have just been explaining, between the last mentioned work of the Spirit, and justification. On the contrary, they are both parts of the same great design, but differ in this respect, that regeneration is the infusion of spiritual life, and sanctification that life when expanded and matured. One is the germ, the other the full grown plant; and to carry out my analogy, as the growth and ripening of the natural world depend upon the genial influences of heat and moisture, so will 'God's husbandry,' 'bring no

fruit to perfection,' unless the beams of the sun of righteousness, and the dews of heavenly influence descend upon the soul."

"Two things, my children, are implied in sanctification; the mortifying of sin, and the increase of personal holiness. The will of the believer is more and more conformed to the will of God: the understanding more and more enlightened by the word and Spirit of truth: all his holy principles are strengthened: and the whole soul is 'filled with the love of God that passeth knowledge.' Perfection however, cannot be attained in this life, and they who profess to have done so, either know not that whereof they affirm, or affix a false idea to the phraseology they use. But our conversation has lasted longer than usual. 'May the very God of peace sanctify us wholly,' that we 'may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.'"

CHAPTER IX.

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us. Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.

"MABEL," said Mrs. Lindsay, on the succeeding Sabbath evening, "what are the benefits

which in this life do either accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?"

"The benefits, aunt, which in this life, do either accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, are assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end."

"The first of these, you know, my children, has already been spoken of, so we will go on to the second."

"But dear aunt, will you not give a little more time to this subject?"

"Certainly, my love, if there is any thing you wish to be informed about."

"Are all who do not possess the evidence of their regeneration to keep back from the Lord's table? You know the Methodists allow those to commune, who only join on probation."

"This practise arises from their erroneous views of the sacrament in question. Presbyterians do not consider it a converting ordinance, though eminently fitted to 'build up in their most holy faith' those in whom the new nature has been implanted. As to the amount of evidence required to make a suitable approach to the feast of love, much depends on temperament, instruction, and other circumstances. Some have only

had a slender thread of hope, resulting perhaps, from a feeling that like Peter, they could declare, 'Lord thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee!' Others apply on the faith of some Scripture promise, like the following; 'He that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out;' 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' As a general rule, where there is faith, though even as 'a grain of mustard seed,' 'which indeed is the least of all seeds,' the holy principle is strengthened and developed by an external profession: though of the two extremes, it is better to wait for more light, using diligently the means of grace all the while, than to rush precipitately into the Church; without oil in the lamp—without the wedding garment—without counting the cost. The Church in these days of profession, is cumbered with these drones in the hive; these loiterers in the vineyard; whose 'spot is not the spot of God's children;' and who, because they speak the language of Canaan, have persuaded themselves and others that they are partakers in the spiritual conquests. We will now examine the next blessing—peace of conscience. Mabel, what is conscience?"

"Aunt, is it not that power of the mind, which finds out what is right or wrong in actions, and

which either gives us peace, or causes great uneasiness."

"It is, my dear. Herbert, what is the rule of conscience?"

"The rule of conscience, mother, is the will of God. This is made known by the light of nature, as expressed by the Apostle. 'For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another. But to those who have the Bible the rule of conscience is the word of God, in which his will is fully expressed.'"

"No subject has been more dwelt upon by writers on moral philosophy," continued Mrs. Lindsay, "than conscience. By some it has been considered an infallible guide—the vicegerent of heaven, and the light within. Such assertions, however, overlook the fact, that as at the fall all the faculties of the mind shared in the general ruin, so conscience was obscured and discoloured even at its source. Its insufficiency and fallibility are proved by the fact, that it often prompts to actions the most removed from the line of rec-

titude: thus Paul 'verily thought with himself that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth,' and the unbelieving Jews had 'a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.' To conscience, the celebrated apostrophe of Madam Roland may well be applied: 'O Liberty! what crimes have been committed in thy name!' Conscience, blinded and perverted, has kindled the flames of the Inquisition; immured unwilling victims in the cloisters and the dungeons; trampled on the holiest instincts of our nature; and consigned whole nations to the tender mercies of dragoons and heretic-hunters."

"And yet, dear mother, this faculty is very important if enlightened."

"Do not suppose for an instant, that I seek to depreciate the value of this mighty monitor. I only wished to show its insufficiency if not rectified from that obliquity which is consequent on Adam's first transgression. The more vividly the Spirit impresses on our minds the perfect rule of life exhibited in Scripture, the more we become aware of our departure from its holy requisitions. Conscience, like every other mental faculty, acquires vigour and sensitiveness from cultivation; and therefore the Christian deplores as heinous sins, what a less informed conscience regards as trifles, or mere pitiable

infirmities. The Psalmist felt, that 'the commandment was exceeding broad,' and our Saviour's code of ethics extended to the thoughts of the heart, and the words of the lips. Hence we see the importance of cherishing tenderness of conscience. If its warnings are regarded, how much after suffering would be prevented; but if we attend not to its suggestions, it becomes blunted in its turn, and no longer gives notice when we are in danger of falling into temptation."

"I suppose, aunt, it is because good men are more careful to examine their spirit and conduct, that we find so much in their diaries of self-accusation."

"It is so. Their confessions of sin, and breathings after holiness, have often been stigmatized as hypocrisy and cant, by those who had not the same acuteness of moral perception as themselves. Here Bunyan's simile of the dusty chamber is very appropriate. While the heart is undisturbed by conviction its sinfulness gives it no trouble; but when once its secret chambers are explored, the moats are flying in all directions. How powerful is conscience when sustained and fortified by Him from whom all good thoughts and holy desires proceed! How has it resisted and triumphed over all the machina-

tions of spiritual tyranny; and enabled helpless women, and tender youth, to expire in transport; or support banishment and poverty with firmness, rather than sacrifice their integrity, or stifle the voice of conscience and of God! But this unnatural state of things we can hardly comprehend in our happy country, where civil and religious liberty go hand in hand, where the rights of conscience are not interfered with, and where every one is permitted to worship God according to his convictions. Peace of conscience—this blessing comprehends, and flows from the privileges we have been considering. It is that peace which Christ promised to his people, 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.' It consists in an assurance that God is no longer angry with them; that he will not reckon with them for their sins; that he has freely pardoned them; that he has received them into favour; that he will protect and bless them; and give them eternal rest in heaven. This my children, is

> "The soul's calm sunshine, and the heartfelt joy,
> Which nought on earth can darken or destroy;"

and is opposed to stupidity of conscience, which knows not what is right; to a false security of conscience, which gives a wrong estimate of our

own characters; to an erring conscience, arising from misapprehension of truth; and to a hardened conscience, which receives not impressions of duty, and which Paul likens to being 'seared with a hot iron.'"

"Conscience may for a while be silenced and put down; but there are times when she will assert her power, and wake her scorpions;

"Her voice is terrible, though soft:"

and could we visit the chamber of the murderer, or the persecutor, we might witness those fearful revelations of remorse and agony which seem foreshadowed by that striking image of our Lord—'the worm that never dies.' What is the next blessing, Mabel?"

"Joy in the Holy Ghost, aunt."

"This is a feeling of mind often inculcated in Scripture. 'Rejoice in the Lord, and again I say rejoice—Rejoice evermore.' 'For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' The emotion of which we are speaking, is very different from mere animal exultation, or the joy of the hypocrite. It is a feeling arising in the soul from the possession of spiritual mercies—the love of God shed abroad by the Spirit in the heart—a view of Christ as presented in the gos-

pel, the hope of enjoying his favour for ever. It is produced by the inhabitation of the Comforter in the heart. 'Whom not having seen, ye love,' says Peter, 'in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' The fact that we stand in the endearing relation of children to the Deity, is enough to gladden the heart. Seen through the medium of faith, 'all things are ours'—and whether trials attend us, or prosperity shines upon our path; whether cast down by sickness and debility, or rejoicing in health and vigour; still can we declare, 'Jehovah is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I trust in him.' Sometimes however, the candle of the Lord is withdrawn for a time, we 'walk in darkness and have no light;' yet let not such an one be discouraged: if he 'fear the Lord and obey the voice of his servant,' he is exhorted to 'trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon his God.'"

"How much difference there is, mother, in the experience of Christians in this respect. Some are always on the mount, others hang their harps on the willows. In what way do you account for this?"

"Some allowance must be made for temperament, and the state of the nervous system. But you must not suppose that even the most favoured

have not their seasons of depression. Growth in grace is not always to be measured by the raptures we experience. While in this vale of tears, we are often met by discouragements and difficulties; and if our obedience is not diligent, zealous, and constant, the soul cannot be kept in a healthy, vigorous state. Let us beware, how we 'forsake the fountain of living waters, and hew out to ourselves broken cisterns which can hold no water.' If the creature, or the world and its pursuits, occupy the first place in our hearts, we shut out spiritual joy from our own souls. If we tire by the way, and fail in that devotedness and self-denial which our Lord requires, how can we expect the visible tokens of his love? But we must pass on to the next particular. What is it, Mabel?"

"Increase of grace, aunt, and perseverance to the end."

"The life of the Christian, my children, has been compared to 'a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day:' and we are told of our Saviour, that 'having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.' The perseverance of the saints, is one of those cardinal doctrines of our Church, that has often been opposed by Arminians and others; but notwithstanding their dislike to it,

is inexpressibly precious to the children of God. 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?' triumphantly asks the Apostle; and the final apostacy of believers is impossible, from the divine constitution."

"But, aunt, David and Peter both were guilty of great sins, were they not?"

"They were, my love; and these cases have often been urged by the enemies of the doctrine in question. But while we cannot but own the shameful departures of both these saints, there is in both instances, such a spirit of contrition and self-abasement manifested, as shows that though Christians may be permitted to go great lengths in transgression, yet they shall not utterly become castaways. This article of our faith is supported by a variety of arguments, as well as the express declarations of Scripture. Our Saviour speaking of his sheep, says, 'And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.' 'Who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation,' says Peter. The same reason is given in both texts—namely, the 'power of God.' All the descriptions of the Christian life are of a pro-

gressive character. A race—a warfare—a narrow-way—all include the idea of continued and persevering action. The kingdom of heaven is likened to leaven, which pervades the whole mass—to a grain of mustard seed, which grows to a great tree, and to a field where the good seed was ripened and gathered into the barn."

"I should think, aunt, that the decrees of God could not be accomplished, if the Christian was ever lost, after enjoying the benefits you have spoken of."

"No, my child! It would sever that golden chain Paul mentions, if those who were 'predestinated, and called, and justified,' were not 'also glorified.' Besides, the covenant made with the people of God by him is not transitory in its nature. 'I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from me.' This fear of God put in the hearts of believers, leads them to keep all his commandments; for it is not a slavish dread, but a reverence for his authority, and a desire to be conformed to his image. When Paul asks, 'Who can lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?' he does not mean to give license for sin, on account of our heavenly hope; as any one may

find, who reads the latter part of the Epistle to the Romans, which is as compendious an exhibition of holy practice, as the first eleven chapters are remarkable for their depth of doctrine and acuteness of reasoning."

"I think, mother, no one can ever accuse you of Antinomianism; you inculcate good works on all occasions."

"I hope, my son, that I may be kept from so awful a perversion as that you speak of: not one of all the Protean forms of error is so fatal to the soul, or so dishonouring to God, as 'holding the truth in unrighteousness.' But it is necessary to reiterate the injunction 'that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works,' because from our peculiar views of the doctrines of grace, we are more liable to be asked the question, which is as old as the days of Paul, 'Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?'—to which he indignantly answered, 'God forbid: how shall we that are dead to sin continue any longer therein.' But another thing which makes this caution needful is, that even while Antinomian principles are disclaimed, there is a tendency in many minds to substitute a false Saviour, whose requisitions suit better with corrupt nature than the holy commands of Christ. In one case, this

dependence may be placed on our orthodoxy, in another on psalmody, in a third on our religious profession or pious descent, but wherever it is fixed to the exclusion of that hope, which 'he that hath in him purifies himself as God is pure,' it is spurious and false."

"The love of Christ as showed in his intercession, is certainly a strong argument in favour of the perseverance of the saints, mother; if on earth, he knew that his Father heard him always, much more would his efficacious pleading avail in heaven."

"You are right, my son; and another consideration of a similar kind is found in the fact, that the Saviour made a full atonement for the sins of his people. If therefore our surety bore our griefs, we may expect the full benefit of this gracious sacrifice; but if we fall from grace, and are excluded from heaven, the punishment of sin will be twice exacted: first of the substitute, and afterwards of those individuals in behalf of whom the vicarious sufferings of our Lord were borne. This is manifestly opposed to the justice and the faithfulness of God. This same truth is also evident from the inhabitation of the Holy Ghost. Our Lord's words to his disciples are, 'I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with

you for ever.' This was a virtual promise, that they should be guided, and directed, and befriended by the Spirit to the end of their lives. Two offices are assigned to this Divine Person, from which the same conclusion may be drawn. He is said to seal believers, and to be the earnest of the future inheritance. 'Who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts:' and again, it is enjoined on us, 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.' A seal is used for different purposes; to mark a person's property, to secure his treasures, or to authenticate a deed. In all these senses the analogy applies. The Spirit marks believers as the peculiar people of God, guards them as his precious jewels, and confirms their title to salvation. But our Comforter is spoken of as 'an earnest.' This is a part, given as a pledge for the future possession of the whole. Grace begun in the soul, will be perfected in glory; and the earnest of the Spirit is manifestly to assure Christians, that the work which he has begun in the soul, he will perform to the day of Jesus Christ. But how could we obtain an earnest, if the inheritance were not unalienably ours? Why should we trust in a sealing spirit, if the property of God could be pur-

loined, his treasures scattered, and his deed of gift annulled? If left to our own strength, which is perfect weakness, we could never stand; but if upheld and supported by Almighty power, we shall prove the stability of his promises, the truth of his salvation. I cannot conclude this evening's conversation better, than by the aspiration of the Apostle: 'Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.'"

CHAPTER IX.

To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.
Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise.

"We have now, my children," said Mrs. Lindsay, on the evening of the succeeding Sabbath, "come to the close of this eventful life in our review of Christian doctrine; and the believer is presented to us on the eve of dissolution. But even in the valley of the shadow of death, Christ is with his people. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death, Mabel?"

"The souls of believers, aunt, are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection."

"Man," resumed Mrs. Lindsay, "differs from the brute creation in possessing a soul united to the body. This subtle principle is the origin of our thoughts, our desires, our reasonings; in it chiefly consists our resemblance to the image of God which was lost by the fall, and restored by the infusion of spiritual life.

"Natural life implies the continuance of the union between the soul and the clay tabernacle; and death is the severance of those so intimately connected on earth."

"How does it happen, aunt, if death is the punishment of sin, that those whose sins are forgiven still endure this part of the penalty?"

"The difficulty you have suggested my dear, has often been urged, and may be satisfactorily accounted for. While we are taught, that 'there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus,' it has seemed good to the Deity to permit them to go through the temporal part of the penal sentence. Except in the case of Enoch and Elijah, there has been no exemption to the announcement, 'Dust thou art, and unto dust

shalt thou return.' Even as in the house infected by leprosy, where the priest was directed to break down 'the stones of it, and the timber thereof, and all the mortar of the house; and he shall carry them forth out of the city into an unclean place,' so God destroys these houses of clay; which are polluted by sin, and defiled with transgression.

"Perhaps God's design in this matter, is to inspire his children with abhorrence of sin, which is followed by such fatal effects; to keep them humble, and give room for the exercise of patience, trust, and hope. In this world we are not to walk by sight, but by faith, and therefore the dread realities of an unseen world are not revealed to the bodily eye, but are made known to us in the Scriptures; and if we believe not 'Moses and the prophets, neither will we be persuaded though one rose from the dead.'"

"Then, mother, if death were the portion of wicked men only, what consternation would it not occasion to survivers!"

"It would indeed, my son, antedate the disclosures of the judgment-day, and unveil the secrets of the invisible state. While the difference between the dissolution of the righteous and the wicked is often marked by triumph and holy rapture in the one, and terror and dismay

in the other; yet there are instances in which good men die without giving witness of their acceptance, and sinners having 'no bands in their death,' evince an apparent composure, or stoical indifference. The reason for this procedure, partly at least, is because this world is not the place where retribution is made, and the separation definitively made between the friends and enemies of God. Besides, we are told that 'the disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord;' if Christ for our sake drank the bitter cup of suffering even to the dregs, 'if he gave up the ghost,' and continued under the power of death for a time; why should we repine, if our path to glory lies through that grave which he has made a safe passage for his people to the end of time. Among the possessions of the Christian reckoned up by Paul, 'whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's,' we see even the last enemy is included; and well may it be so, when it terminates our weary pilgrimage on earth, and brings us home to our Father's house, where there 'are many mansions.' 'Made perfect in holiness,'—what a privilege! 'The body of sin and death' cleaves to us here, but cannot

pass the confines of the tomb. 'The spirits of just men made perfect' are among the inhabitants of 'Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem;' and in Revelations, 'the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held,' 'had white robes given unto every one of them.' These spirits pass immediately into glory. What error is here opposed, Herbert?"

"That of the Roman Catholics, mother, who pretend that all who do not die in mortal sin, are exposed to the purifying flames of purgatory. This opinion was doubtless borrowed from the heathen, as it is found both among their poets and philosophers; and as for them, it was not surprising, that being ignorant of the true purification for sin, they should imagine false ones. Nor would this mistake have ever become so prevalent in the Papacy, had it not been for the immense gain, which it brings to the corrupt Church that patronizes it. The satisfaction of Christ, and the surplus merits of the saints, have furnished a fund of untold wealth to the Pope and his satellites. Working on the tenderest sympathies of the human heart, appeals have been made to survivors calculated to lead them to sacrifice and exertion, to pay for prayers and masses, which may benefit the deceased. In

past ages of by-gone darkness, the mania for endowments and church legacies was so strong that the civil authority was compelled to interfere; the delusion was supported by false visions and miracles, of which one does not know whether they are to be despised for their silliness, or abhorred for their impiety."

"The immediate transition to heaven of the disembodied spirit," continued Mrs. Lindsay, "is proved by Scripture. '*To-day* shalt thou be with me in Paradise.' 'Having a desire to depart and be with Christ which is far better.' What a change will it be, when faith is turned to sight, and hope is lost in fruition; while love, the greatest of the three, will increase and glow with ever-during intensity. But the body must participate in the triumphs of its consort; and though consigned to the tomb, and made to see corruption, it is a part of the Saviour's purchase, still united to Christ, and shall be 'fashioned like unto his glorious body,' in the resurrection of the just. Rest in their graves—what an idea of repose and safety does this image express! 'There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest.'"

"What do you think, mother, about the germ or seminal principle in the human body, which is said to be indestructible by death?"

"I think, my son, that we have no authority for any such hypothesis, which exists only in a gratuitous assumption, without proof, or even probability. That the identity of the body will be preserved, we must suppose, else it would be a new creation, and not a resurrection: but in what that identity consists, we are, from our ignorance, unable to decide. The Apostle's simile of a grain of wheat, justifies the idea of developement; and the change from the voracious crawling caterpillar, to the painted butterfly, exulting in its new-found wings, and fluttering about from flower to flower, seems to indicate that our resurrection-bodies may be much more glorious than those we now call our own, and decorate so fondly. What benefits will believers receive from Christ at the resurrection, Mabel?"

"At the resurrection, aunt, believers being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity."

"'Now,' my children, 'has Christ risen from the dead, and is become the first fruits of them that slept.' His resurrection is the pledge and security for that of his people. When the great white throne was erected, John saw 'the dead,

small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades (the invisible world) delivered up the dead which were in them, and they were judged every man according to their works.' The resurrection of the dead will be followed by the general judgment, of which the above is the figurative and impressive account from the Apocalypse of John. Our Saviour has also given us a narrative of the transactions of that awful day, when 'before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.' Christ himself will be the judge, coming 'in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.' On that awful day the secrets of men's hearts shall be made known, the wicked sent to the place of punishment, and the righteous received into 'the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.' Our Catechism says, that believers are raised up in glory, and the Apostle speaking of this body, calls it a spiritual one,

and says 'this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.' How can we, in our present state of weakness and infirmity, comprehend the force of this description; or realize the vigour, the beauty, the capability of that new and delightful existence. We have Christ's word for it, that 'in the resurrection we shall be as the angels of God in heaven;' and how mighty, how resplendent, how holy, are these ministering spirits. They shall be openly acknowledged. Often in this world, the Lord's hidden ones are slighted and despised; but there, they shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. The great and mighty of the earth would gladly at that time change places with those who were alone rich in faith, and abounding with good works; for it is of these the Saviour questions those who are summoned, and vain are their hopes who rest on their having said 'Lord, Lord;' or in prophesying 'in the name of Christ, or even casting out devils, and doing many wonderful works,' if with all this they have worked iniquity. Believers shall be acquitted. In Christ, God 'hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel;' their love, their obedience, and their self-denial is accepted, and acts of kindness 'done unto one of the least of these his brethren,' the

Judge will account as done unto himself. In the day of judgment—all the descriptions given us in the Bible of this trying hour are most impressive and sublime. Daniel tells us, 'I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the judgment was set and the books were opened.' And John depicts this time as follows: 'And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places; and the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?' The wrath of the Lamb! How much is included in that expression! O! my children, may you never experience the full im-

port of those awful words! We turn from the unhappy ones on the left, who have been cursed, and told to depart 'into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels,' and contemplate the blessedness of those to whom the sweet and gladdening sounds will be addressed, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father'—'Well done good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord.' Made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity. How weak is language to describe this blessedness! We are told that 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him;' and if we only reflect for a moment on the inheritance Christ has secured for us, we shall discover that it is 'incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away.' If this world is so full of beauty and richness, marred as it is by the prevalence of sin, and disfigured by the effects of transgression, how will that better land abound in all that is lovely to the eye, delightful to the ear, or entrancing to the mind! For we cannot but think that our glorified bodies will be a thousand times more susceptible of every pleasing emotion, than these abodes of weakness and decay: while our spirits, nurtured in heavenly things, and sublimated by intercourse with Deity, angels,

and other holy beings, will be prepared to contribute largely to the felicity of the corporeal portion, to which they shall be reunited."

"Do you think, mother, that the saints in heaven will remember those they knew on earth?"

"Assuredly my son. Will not the mother recognize that only boy for whose salvation her tears and prayers were so often mingled on earth? And as with increased knowledge, she now discovers why the blessing was so long withheld; why, when life was spared in one dangerous attack after another, the heart was left unsoftened till hope almost died within her, prompting her to yet more engaged pleading at the throne of grace, and at last perhaps, the lower sanctuary was exchanged for the higher without this one petition being granted; will not her praises rise with higher tone to welcome her prodigal to his Father's house on high. Will not the faithful minister be aware that those to whom he broke the bread of life are now partaking with him in 'the marriage supper of the Lamb.' And may we not expect that ties so closely interwoven with our best emotions here, will be renewed and freshened by our intercourse in that atmosphere of love. To all eternity—this is the finishing stroke to the picture. Here, all is transitory, illusive, and

deceitful. There, will be the full enjoying of God to all eternity. What progress will the human mind attain in its intercourse with him that sitteth on the throne, and with the Lamb, throughout the ceaseless ages of a never-ending immortality! My children, this hope of glory far exceeds, and casts in the shade the baubles of earth, and fills the heart with aspirations as ennobling as they are pure. Seek first this kingdom of heaven; live here as expectants of it, and order all your conduct as it will be reflected to the mind in the sea of glass like unto crystal which is before the throne.

CHAPTER X.

Now of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

"Is it possible, aunt," exclaimed Mabel, on the ensuing Sabbath evening, "that our precious conversations will be terminated so soon!"

"Your hasty summons home will certainly put an end to them," replied her aunt; "but we will hope that the instruction you have received will not be forgotten as soon as you leave us."

"I fear that those Southern gaieties will drive

our theology out of your head, Mabel," said Herbert. "I think my uncle need not have recalled you so suddenly. Does he doubt my mother's care of you, or think you are not happy with us?"

"Neither the one, nor the other, Herbert; be assured, my father knows too well how comfortable you have both made me. No doubt he has some good reasons for his conduct, though he has not explained them. But, aunt, would it not be a good plan to go over the different points of doctrine as you have discussed them; I think it would impress them more forcibly on my mind."

"Your idea is a good one, my dear, and we will spend this evening in epitomizing the views of Divine truth that have occupied us this season. May they ever retain that influence on your mind which their importance merits! You know we commenced with God's creative power, as exhibited in the formation of our first parents, who were placed in their blissful bowers of Paradise, made in the image of Deity, endowed with powers suited to their situation, blessed in the society of each other, the communion of God and holy angels, and privileged to a degree which their degenerate descendants can scarcely realize. With our great progenitor, God in his providence entered into a covenant,

which, had it been observed, would have secured the happiness of the whole human race: but 'man in honour abideth not,' the penalty was incurred, and the felicity of Eden forfeited. The consequences of this fatal act, we found in the sin and misery of Adam's descendants; their alienation from God; and their liability to death, temporal, spiritual and eternal. This was supported by Scripture, as well as the prevalence of mortality; extending even to those who were incapable of actual sin; and thus our species was proved to be condemned already. 'Children of wrath,' 'having come short of the glory of God.' In this darkness, however, a beam of hope appeared; the germ of prophecy unfolded by degrees; until in the fulness of time the great Deliverer appeared, to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself. After tracing the predictions, which alike foretold the glory and abasement of our Immanuel, we considered his Divine and human natures, his offices, work, and reward. The foreknowledge and foreordination of God came next, when I endeavoured to prove this article of faith from Scripture, to explain, and defend it. After this needful digression, the Personality and Agency of the Holy Spirit, and the doctrine of the Trinity were then taken up; and while looking to Revelation as

our only guide on subjects so far beyond the reach of unaided reason, much was found there that on any other system would be unmeaning, or contradictory, while by adopting our views of the Godhead, all was harmonized and explained. Next followed the office-work of the Spirit, as the applier of the redemption wrought out by the Saviour, and exemplified effectual calling in justification, adoption, and sanctification. The consequences of these, including assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance to the end, ensued: and the benefits to be received by believers at death, and in the resurrection, finished our endeavours to vindicate the ways of God to man.

"But what are the feelings that this short summary of truth should awaken in your minds? Herbert, let us hear your impressions."

"Our first feeling, I think, mother, should be adoration of the wonderful perfections of Deity, as exemplified in the course you have pursued. Well might the Apostle exclaim, 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!' But beyond all his other attributes, that of love for our fallen world shines out conspicuously bright. Sure

none but God could plan a method to save the rebellious children of Adam, so gracious and so grand, as that by which 'his own Son was delivered up for us all.'"

"And what do you think of our system, Mabel?"

"O! aunt, my faith seems so weak, my obedience so imperfect, my views of Divine truth so confused, that I hardly dare to put in my humble claim to a participation in the glories you have portrayed; and yet my hope is so precious, that I cannot give it up."

"Give it up, Mabel," said Herbert earnestly, "never think of such a thing; remember that 'the righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.' Let not your discouragements make you relinquish what you have already attained, but 'press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.'"

"You have much mistaken me, dear child," observed Mrs. Lindsay, "if you have taken any thing but encouragement from what has been said. While it is right to have a high standard of duty, you must remember that you are yet young in the divine life, and cannot have attained that maturity of knowledge, or fulness of faith, consequent on long established and

deeply rooted Christian character. The great mistake is, when young professors think that they have done all there is to do when they assumed the name of Christ, and that they shall grow holy as necessarily as they grow old. Progress—that much abused word—progress, in the highest sense of the term, should be the motto of the Christian, and especially of the young Christians of our day; for to them we must look for more devotedness and higher attainments in holiness, than their predecessors have shown. Never, till consecration of heart and property be rightly understood and fully practised, will the Church put on that power and influence she was designed to wield; and never will her system of doctrines be appreciated as it deserves, till her members are more single-minded in their practice, more weaned from worldly conformity, and more desirous to walk 'even as Christ walked' while he tarried in our world. Little will it avail us in the day of retribution, that we belonged to a church of pure doctrine, scriptural order, and inexhaustible resources, if we have not the vitality and power of godliness in our heart and life. O! then, my beloved children, be not like the degenerate Hebrews, who 'spake half in the language of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language,

but according to the language of each people;' but as you need a whole Christ, be his entirely, not in word only, but in deed and in truth. And as far as your influence extends, plead with those who have been brought up in our excellent faith not to forsake the Lord God of their fathers. While they possess a speculative belief in the truth, they have not the excuse of ignorance to plead, yet do they fall short of that assimilating faith which shall enable them to benefit by their doctrinal knowledge, and embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to them in the gospel. O! that such would place a higher value on the heritage they cast from them so unwisely; and instead of reaching to that which will not profit in the day of their calamity, that they might fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life."

END OF PART II.

WHY AM I A PRESBYTERIAN?

PART III.

EXPERIMENTAL PIETY.

WHY AM I A PRESBYTERIAN?

LETTER I.

FROM MABEL HARCOURT TO MRS. LINDSAY.

Magnolia Grove.

My Dear Aunt:—My journey has been safely accomplished, and I have arrived at home in good health, though somewhat fatigued; and shall I confess it? a little homesick for that quiet abode, and those kind friends, so intimately connected with my fondest recollections. The reception given me by my dear parents was most cordial, though my humility, or as Herbert would say, my pride—will not permit me to repeat their partial encomiums on my growth, improvement, &c.

On one subject, however, a sad disclosure awaited me; and the tone of mystery in my father's letter, which had so much puzzled us, was soon explained. His reason for withdrawing me from your sheltering roof so hastily, was, that his fears had become excited by the illness of my dear sister Edith, of whose delicate health

we have lately heard, though not in terms to create serious alarm. My fears were first aroused by not finding her among the group that awaited my arrival in the ample portico in front of my father's house; when in answer to my eager inquiries, I found that she was unable to leave her room. On seeing her, the first glance sufficed to show me the greatest change in her appearance; and I could scarcely forbear from expressing my grief and consternation to her, though my father had enjoined calmness, as we ascended the stairs.

She received me with the tenderest affection; and as soon as we were left alone together, she said: "Can you forgive me, dearest Mabel, for calling you away from your happy northern home, when you were improving so rapidly? It was my doing to send for you, but when you know my reason, I am sure you will not be angry. Nay hear me out, love," she pursued, seeing I was about to speak, "it was not on account of my poor suffering body that I needed you, but for my soul's benefit. I am going to die, Mabel, though our fond parents will not believe it, and I want you, the pupil of my dear aunt, to instruct me in religion as she has instructed you. Pray with me, my sister, and comfort me, and try to fit me for the unknown

world before me, for I am weak, and ignorant, and fearful."

The impression which this address made on my feelings, heightened as it was, by her mournful, earnest countenance, and the low, impressive tones of her voice, I cannot describe; my tears would no longer be repressed, and we wept together for some time unrestrainedly.

It was hard to determine the predominant feeling of my mind; joy—that my beloved sister should thus sympathize in my religious feelings; or sorrow—that her precious life was in danger from disease. The first far exceeded my most sanguine expectations, as I had always feared lest Edith's influence would be adverse to any efforts I might make to give the things of the kingdom more prominence in the family; well knowing that she had not been in circumstances likely to advance her in the spiritual life, partly owing to our good old pastor's age and infirmity, and the distance between his house and my father's residence.

As soon as I could speak coherently, I represented to Edith that I was unfitted for the task she had assigned me, and urged her to apply to my dear father for counsel and aid: but she pleaded in the strongest terms that it would be unkind to arouse him or my mother from their

dream of security before the time. We finally compromised matters by agreeing to refer to you for instruction on the important subject of Practical Holiness, hoping that you will commence with the first operations of the Spirit, and go on to depict the mature Christian's experience and hope.

By this plan those conversations on Sabbath evening, which I found so useful, will be replaced, while my poor Edith will receive that information for which she is so eager; nor will the benefits rest here, as I shall explain to you by and bye.

As to my sister, all my sympathies are deeply interested for her. Next in age to myself, her natural amiability kept her from being half so troublesome or unruly as I was; and while my exuberant spirits were constantly leading me to overstep the boundaries prescribed, she was ever docile and obedient. Of course she made much more improvement in her studies, under our mutual governess, Miss Green, whose mild system was inadequate to quell my turbulent disposition. Finding me so unmanageable, our teacher, as may be supposed, became partial to my sister, and even held her up to me as an example worthy of my imitation. This injudicious conduct, however, never disturbed our mutual

affection; I never annoyed her with my pranks, and she forbore to lecture me, or assume airs of superiority; on the contrary, she was my constant apologist, and always averred, that if I would only apply to my studies, I would soon show that my talents were not contemptible. Dear partial girl!

But this is not all; Edith tells me no one has been more pleased and surprised by my improvement than Miss Green, and that she has not only recalled all her evil prognostications from my early aberrations, but has also confessed, that perhaps her system was deficient in that religious bias which trains the moral sense, while the mind is cultivated in the fields of knowledge. In short, she feels for herself as well as her pupils, the want of a more operative Christianity. So you see, dear aunt, that your letters will be useful to us all; do not be afraid of our thinking you prolix, but begin at the beginning.

From what I have said, I think Herbert need not be uneasy lest Southern gayeties should turn my head, or Southern beaux attack my heart.

Farewell, dear aunt! Write soon, and pray often for your own child in the faith,

MABEL HARCOURT.

LETTER II.

MRS. LINDSAY TO MABEL HARCOURT.

Violet Vale.

My Dear Girl: — Your letter had been anxiously looked for, and was eagerly opened. While we rejoiced to hear of your safe arrival at home, the news of your sister's illness was an unexpected trial to us.

Most sincerely do I hope her forebodings may not be realized, as regards her young and precious life; but whether they are fulfilled or not, it is certain that the influence of religion to calm the mind, and induce submission to the will of God, is highly salutary. I shall therefore take great pleasure in unfolding to her the outlines of Christian experience; and though from the distance between us, and the want of knowledge of her state of mind, or information on the subject, I may not always be able to suit her case, yet I will to the best of my ability discharge the trust you have committed to me. May my poor endeavours be directed aright, and obtain efficiency from on high!

I need hardly tell you, my dear Edith, for to you, I would now address myself, that revolted man is by nature in a state of enmity against

God; but though all are willing to call themselves sinners, few realize the evil and turpitude of sin. The universality of this condemnation is clearly made known in the Scriptures. "Born in the likeness of a sinful progenitor;" "children of wrath;" "dead in trespasses and sins;" "having no hope and without God in the world;" "condemned already;" "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." To that bar against our acceptance with a holy Being which original sin presents, is added as soon as the evil tendencies are developed, those actual transgressions, which varying as they do in heinousness, nature and degree, are still offences against God's moral government; and demand the punishment of the offender, that the justice of the Lawgiver may be maintained.

I have said, that there is a vast dissimilarity in the overt acts of rebellion. Some quiescent minds

"Content to dwell in decencies for ever,"

never do anything that may be esteemed vulgar or grossly improper, and fenced in by conventionalities and restraints of habit, think themselves very estimable people, while they pay as little regard to the word of God, and feel as little amenable to his requisitions, as if these sacred realities

were like the idle wind which we regard not. Some on the other hand, are open violaters of all moral obligations, and say like those of old time, "Who is lord over us?" It may seem hard to place those who are amiable in their deportment, and pleasing in their appearance, in the same list as the profligate and the abandoned; but in one respect at least, they are alike, if in a state of nature; that God is not in all their thoughts, and his glory not the end they seek to promote. Unbelief is the crowning sin of those who have the gospel in their hands, because it prevents them from accepting the remedy for man's transgression, which that precious book reveals. Unbelief rejects alike the promises and threatenings of inspiration; contemns the mediation of the Saviour, and quenches the strivings of the Spirit of all grace. Under its benumbing influence, man is content to live estranged from holiness, and spends that time in pleasure, business, or other worldly avocations, which should be devoted to "seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." Oh! but for this strong delusion, would the sinner dare to live on in his guilt so unconcernedly, when there is but a hand's breadth between him and everlasting death?

The Christian's heart sickens at the thought,

that rational, accountable, beings, who are acute in their perceptions, and clear in their deductions on other subjects, here show such inconsistency and folly; for many of these persons pretend to receive the precepts of the Bible as divinely inspired, and own its doctrines to be true; even while they live in utter disregard of the one, and violation of the other. I have known a youth of this class, who was a good judge of preaching, and boasted of his orthodoxy. In childhood he delighted in religious instruction, and assisted with eagerness in the arrangements for a prayer-meeting; in sickness, he had made promises of amendment, and confessed his culpability, and yet after preservations the most wonderful, he could neglect the public worship of God's house, desecrate the Sabbath, and inflict on his parents' hearts the bitter grief of feeling, that thus far at least, their prayers and instructions were in vain, as regarded him.

But I must close this long letter, my dear Edith, by expressing my fervent hope that unbelief may never keep you from that Saviour, whose blood cleanseth from all sin, and whose grace can forgive all our iniquities, as well as heal all our diseases. Thus prays your affectionate aunt,

ELLEN LINDSAY.

P. S. Herbert says he will write his own message, and sends best love to all.

LETTER III.

MRS. LINDSAY TO EDITH HARCOURT.

Violet Vale.

My Dear Edith:—In my last letter, all in a state of nature were proved to be included under the condemnation of sin. For the most part however, this sad condition is attended by little or no trouble, even in the cases of the most flagrant offenders.

> "They live estranged, afar from God,
> And love the distance well."

The strong man, armed, keepeth the house, and confident in his prowess, bids defiance to attack. Some checks of conscience, the sinner must feel, for that monitor will at times assert its power; but this feeble barrier is insufficient to stem the tide of evil, as it rolls forward in its accelerated might. And yet this worm of the dust is dependent on that Maker, whose requirements he has outraged and whose rights he has defrauded; for all his powers of mind, his bodily frame, his continued existence, and his earthly blessings.

If the fiat of Jehovah go forth, man's beauty withers like a moth, his wealth departs, his mental energies must fail, and while his body crumbles to the dust, his spirit

> "No reckoning made, but sent to his account
> With all his imperfections on his head"

is summoned to the bar of Him who gave it. Surely this conflict is an unequal one, and to wage war with such an adversary, must only make the sinner's overthrow inevitable. Without resting our argument on a state of future retribution solely, even under this dispensation of mercy, the displays of Divine displeasure have been so great, as to foreshow what will be the measure of his righteous indignation as it will be poured out on the wicked in the day of his wrath.

But not alone the power of Deity opposes the rebel's continued course of opposition and unbelief; his goodness, to a generous mind, would be a strong incentive "to lead us to repentance." If we consider the human system, with its skilful contrivances and various mechanism; its chemical processes; its strength and symmetry; the wise accommodation of its parts to the ends required; and the mighty range of power both physical and intellectual; we must acknowledge

that "we are fearfully and wonderfully made." Has not then our great Architect a right to govern those beings that his hand has made? Will not a retrospective view of our lives recall to us many a kind interposition of his Providence, and striking display of his power to deliver from dangers and from death? How can we grieve so good a Friend, or venture to provoke so kind a Benefactor? But if neither the power nor the goodness of God can induce us, to "cease to do evil, and learn to do well," a regard to our own happiness might well be esteemed a cogent argument to induce us to seek his testimonies. Even in this life "godliness hath a promise;" and though temporal prosperity is not always a mark of God's favour, yet it is certain, that the observance of his commands and the avoidance of sin, will in a general way, greatly contribute to our happiness and health. But as regards the world to come, all doubt is set at rest, as to the wisdom of choosing the Lord as our portion; even the impenitent must own that in this respect the Christian has the better part; for who among us shall dwell with devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?

Few, even of the most unthinking, can bear the thought of thus running upon the thick

bosses of Jehovah's buckler; but they defer the consideration of eternal things to some more convenient season. This spirit of procrastination has slain its tens of thousands. How do we know that time is in our hands? Who can insure us the continuance of life, mind, and consciousness? May not the pressure of disease, the wildness of delirium, or the torpor of exhaustion, incapacitate us in a dying hour from all thoughts or exercises of a holy kind? Truly may it be said, "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation."

Often do we find sinners seeking to raise up some plea as a ground of excuse before God. Some allege that they are descended from pious parents. This is indeed a privilege, if rightly improved; the piety of parents is not, however, necessarily continued to their children, except by the especial favour of God; and natural descent does not always carry with it the title to eternal life. David had an Absalom, and we find it on record that "the sons of God are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Others contend, as an extenuation of their conduct, that their doctrinal views are orthodox. By what sophistry can that be made an apology for laxity of practice, which only enhances its danger and its

guilt? The reproach of a cold, barren orthodoxy, has too often been made by the enemies of sound doctrine, without its professed friends lending their sanction to so foul a slander. Little will it avail us, were our faith ever so pure, our knowledge ever so profound, if our lives are not in accordance with the requirements of God's law.

Some, on the other hand, rest their hope on their moral life, good deeds, and never having done any harm. But no acts can be acceptable in the Divine sight, that are not the fruit of love to Christ, and union with him. The young ruler thought he had kept all the commandments from his youth up, yet failed in the requisition made by our Lord; and as to doing no harm, the assertion is a fallacy. Is it no harm to disobey God, neglect the salvation of our own souls, and by our influence and example draw others into like condemnation with ourselves? But we must own, my dear child, after all the arguments that can be advanced to convince the sinner of his guilt and exposedness to punishment, it is the Spirit only that can bring home divine truth to his heart. If this powerful teacher were to set in array before the mind the sins that any one of us has committed, in thought, word, and deed, the terrible account

would fill us with confusion and dismay. Then all the flimsy excuses we have set up, fall before the searching scrutiny of enlightened conscience: the law of God is found to be exceeding broad, extending to the words of the lips, and the thoughts of the heart; all our neglected privileges, our warnings unimproved, and our mercies perverted to our injury, rise up before us, and sit heavy on our souls. Every offer of mercy rejected, every gospel sermon slighted, only increases our distress; and in this state of mind, the Apostle's exclamation is well understood: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Yet strange to say, under this enlightenment, the sinner finds it is not so easy to work the work of faith. His services appear worthless in his eyes, his best approaches are unworthy of his Maker, and he begins to feel like the Psalmist, "If thou Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who can stand?" All the good works and amiable tempers so esteemed, before now appear wanting and incomplete, and our best "righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Dearest Edith, have you been led to see your utter unworthiness in the sight of a Holy God; to feel

"That all your services are nought;"

and that "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh

be justified before God?" If you have, be not cast down, as if there was no door of escape for you; for the gracious declaration of our Saviour is, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." They only who feel their sin will apply to him who has deliverance to give; and unless we have tried and discovered the inefficacy of all other schemes, we shall never realize the worth of that heaven-devised plan by which our sins and our iniquities shall be remembered no more. Think not that I have been a miserable comforter, in expatiating as I have on the guilt and danger of our race in their unconverted state. The surgeon must probe the wound ere the healing balm can be applied; so he who would deal faithfully with souls must not soothe them with fallacious hopes, but on the contrary, strip off all their refuges of lies, that they may be prepared for the consolations of the gospel.

In my next, the nature and extent of conviction will be considered. Ever your affectionate aunt,

ELLEN LINDSAY.

P. S.—Herbert desires to be remembered to all friends, and hopes that Mabel will take some notice of his letter.

LETTER IV.

MABEL HARCOURT TO MRS. LINDSAY.

Magnolia Grove.

My Dear Aunt:—I am much obliged to you for the promptness with which you complied with my request, but—how shall I find courage to tell you?—I did not find your communications as consolatory as I had expected; and had it not been for the conclusion of your second letter, I should have felt that they were fitted to aggravate, rather than to console the distress of my poor Edith. This part, however, revealed to me your intentions; and if my sister thought as I did, of the rest of your instructions, she found comfort in the idea that the Lord Jesus came to save *sinners*. When you spoke of good works being made a ground of dependence, she exclaimed, "That was my reliance, Mabel, but I now find my poor performances will never avail me as a ground of justification." Do, dear aunt, remember how anxious we are for more of your winged messages of mercy, and write without delay. What you said about my sister's prognostics being mistaken, has I own, given me some hope, I am so used to take all you say as my oracles; and I ventured to suggest this to her.

"If I can be relieved from this distress of mind, love," she replied, "I shall be better able to think about my health: I dread to have my bodily strength restored, if I am to be tossed upon this sea of doubts and darkness." "How can that be," said I, "are you willing to die in your present state?" "Far from it," answered she," but while the rod is laid on me, I feel that perhaps its very object is to attain the blessing I need; should I get well without that, and my present concern be succeeded by my former insensibility of heart, what hope will then be for me?"

But your letters are to do good to more than Edith, dear aunt. I gave them to Miss Green, at her request, to peruse, and it seems that she has made use of them, in a Bible-class, composed of all her pupils, from the three families who partake of her instructions. I had promised Miss Green that I would close the exercises with prayer, and therefore had an opportunity of hearing something of what was said by the young auditors. My brother Edwin, whose vacation has allowed him to visit home at this time, seemed quite attentive; but a poor boy who has been befriended by Mr. Morton's family was most interested in the subject. Some of the girls, I am sorry to say, yawned, and one of the

Misses Morton was arranging her curls. Tell Herbert I thought he was so busy with his musty folios, that letter paper or foolscap would be beneath his notice. His letter however, convinced me, that I was not forgotten. Thank him for all his kind advice, and tell him never to think of relinquishing that Mentorship, which at one time was no sinecure, until he is again compelled to pronounce me *incorrigible.*

Farewell, my beloved aunt! Do not forget your own

MABEL.

LETTER V.

MRS. LINDSAY TO MABEL HARCOURT.

Violet Vale.

My Dear Girl:—I hasten to reply to your letter just received. The feeling revealed in your sister's expressions, as quoted by you, bear the marks of real concern of mind, and appears to me a favourable indication. With all my love for her, it would be cruel to prophecy smooth things, and cry "Peace, when there is no peace." On the contrary, I would rather she should feel acutely the demerit of sin, the pollution it entails, and the danger of that punish-

ment to which it is obnoxious. I should wish her to become assured that neither good resolutions, nor outward observances, nor contrition for past offences, can avail aught as the means of obtaining peace with God. For even if these were so meritorious as to be acceptable in the eyes of the Deity—apart from other procuring causes—could they make amends for the past? and are they not the bounden duty of intelligent beings, and but that which it is incumbent on them to render?

There are many different opinions among theologians as respects conviction of sin; some regarding it as merely a legal work, to drive the sinner to Christ as his only refuge; and others believing it of the essence of faith. The first consider this an exercise antecedent to regeneration; the second view it as one of the effects of that blessed work.

But this question is not easy to settle, or profitable for you, my children, to investigate. That many, like Felix, tremble under the preaching of the gospel, and yet stifle their concern; or that others experience great depression of spirit, and yet never find the way of peace, should not induce us to undervalue this humbling process. From the words of our Saviour, John xvi. 8, it would seem that the unregenerate were the sub-

jects of the Spirit's convicting agency; and certain it is that conviction does not always eventuate in conversion.

The extent and degree of this exercise of soul varies exceedingly in different individuals; not only from the diverse nature of the Spirit's operations, but also from the modifications belonging to the temperament, character, and nervous tendencies of those who are affected by it. Young Christians are often led to the Saviour with little or none of that dismay and terror by which others are visited, sometimes to such intenseness as almost to affect their reason. Nor should any seek after this depth of horror and despair, even if some who have passed through it, like Bunyan, have afterwards been eminent for piety. It is important that a sinner should have a clear and full persuasion of the guilt of sin, both original and actual; a deep apprehension of the dreadful wrath of God, and the miseries of hell as merited by him; and that he should feel the inadequateness of all other righteousness, and the insufficiency of all other satisfaction than that offered to him in the Gospel of Christ Jesus. Equally various, is the time which intervenes between a sense of sin and an assurance of pardon; many are left in doubt of their interest in the plan of salvation for months,

and even years, while others are born to God in a day. It is common to find convicted sinners striving by increased attention to duty, to recommend themselves to their Maker's favour; they pray more fervently, hear preaching more attentively, even as Herod "did many things, and heard John gladly." But they soon find that these are but poor dependencies, and that even their holiest approaches are unworthy the notice of a God of purity. It is only when divested of all false hopes, driven off from every refuge of lies, and deeply conscious of their sin and misery that they can rightly appreciate the glad tidings of salvation through a Redeemer. This salvation is not only from the penalty of sin, but frees from its pollution also, by infusing holy tempers and spiritual desires. Obedience formerly rendered as a ground of justification, is now offered as a proof of love to the Saviour. The soul rejoices in the belief that she is the Beloved's, and that the Beloved is hers; while faith triumphs in a newly found Redeemer, the "chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely." What a change from the condemning sentence of the law re-echoed by conscience, to the pardoning love and overcoming grace of the gospel! Nor in all this process, from first to last, has any thing been done coercively, and contrary to the

sinner's volition; Christ's people are made "willing in the day of his power," and being drawn "with the cords of love, as with the bands of a man," "follow him in the regeneration."

But perhaps my poor Edith is all this time fearing that these consolations are not for her; that she is too great a sinner to be accepted; and therefore feels all these descriptions as but heightening her pain, by the contrast they present to her sad condition.

Hear then, my afflicted child, what the Master says: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink;" let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take of the waters of life freely." "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." Will not these free and gracious invitations show you, that there is room for you in the heart of the Saviour, as well as in the courts of heaven? Will not Paul's answer to the jailor's question, "What shall I do to be saved?" suit your case also—"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved?" Yes, dear girl! faith is the hand that is held out to receive the boon of eternal life; faith is the connecting link between the Redeemer and his people; and this faith is the gift of God. Come then to the

mercy-seat with the plea of him of old, "Lord I believe, help thou my unbelief!" In the words of the hymn,

> "Let not conscience make you linger,
> Nor of fitness fondly dream;
> All the fitness He requireth,
> Is to feel your need of Him."

Do the risings of corruption in your heart display to you the fearful state of its chambers of imagery, as they are revealed by Paul in the seventh chapter of Romans? Like him rejoice, that "it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came to save sinners," even the chiefest of them. Do you perceive a strange stupidity and coldness in your heart, that will not respond to the condescending love of God? Even this is provided for in that gracious promise—"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh."

"How," you ask, "is this new heart to be obtained?" The winding up of the text just quoted tells you. "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them." Prayer, humble persevering prayer, is the appointed medium of communication between

God and his Church. The prevalence of prayer is often spoken of in Scripture. In Luke xi. 5, there is a striking illustration of it. The good man of the house has gone to his repose—family cares are over for the day—the safety and comfort of his offspring are alike provided for—and sleep and silence reign in his peaceful dwelling. An intruder appears, and assails the slumbering household in the dead of night. His request is urgent, for his hospitality has been appealed to; but "he from within" is unwilling to be disturbed. "Trouble me not," we hear him drowsily declare—"the door is now shut and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee."

Is the applicant discouraged by this repulse? doubtless he was not, but continued his solicitations, till, "because of his importunity," the host was compelled to "rise, and give him as many as he needed." And what is the practical application made by our Lord? "Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you." But hear the climax of the Master's condescension—"If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" With the encouragement af-

forded by these comprehensive declarations of the Bible, I must now conclude this long letter.

I am rejoiced to hear that your father's official duties will soon permit him to revisit his family, even for a short time. Let not my dear Mabel be too sanguine in her expectations from my letters. No doubt, like the rams' horns before Jericho, this feeble instrumentality may be made successful; but only as it is blessed by the great Head of Influences. Would that my personal efforts could be made to minister to the comfort of the suffering invalid! I rejoice to hear that the Bible class is established, and that Mabel is to close it with prayer. With kind regards to your mother, Miss Green, and the dear children, Edwin included—that is, if he is not too much of a man for such comprehension—I am, my dear niece, your affectionate aunt,

ELLEN LINDSAY.

P. S.—Herbert begs to be included in my remembrances.

LETTER VI.

HERBERT LINDSAY TO MABEL AND EDITH HARCOURT.

Violet Vale.

My Dear Cousins:—As my mother is so much occupied this week with a sick neighbour as to

be prevented from writing her usual budget, she has desired me to take her place. I do not, however, intend to pursue the train of thought on which she is now addressing you; I prefer to direct your attention to a subject not inappropriate to her plan; though perhaps my manner of approaching it may not have the easy and familiar style which she employs so happily. I will try, however, to throw aside the pedant, knowing how much Mabel dislikes that character.

The topic I have selected is the Agent in the great work of regeneration—the Holy Spirit. Perhaps some things may be repeated which were said in the conversations on doctrine, to which Mabel so often refers; but I will endeavour not to do so, more than is unavoidable.

It is, to me, utterly inconceivable how any one conversant with Scripture, can deny the personality, or as I view it, the real existence of the Spirit of God. This Divine Person, whom my old favourite invokes so eloquently,

> "And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
> Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
> Instruct me, for thou know'st: That from the first
> Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread,
> Dove-like, sat'st brooding on the vast abyss"—

moved, as we are told, "upon the face of the waters," in primeval chaos; ceased from striv-

ing with the wicked antediluvians; descended on the seventy elders in the time of Moses; came upon Balaam, inspiring him to predict those glories which his covetousness debarred him from partaking; dwelt in Joshua, the namesake and antitype of our Emmanuel; "spake by David;" ("as the Holy Ghost saith") gave Isaiah his power of evangelic prophecy; indited in Ezekiel the promise of his own regenerating influences; was declared by Haggai to "remain among" his people Israel; and was by Zachariah announced as one to be poured upon the house of David as the Spirit of grace and supplication; while Malachi informs us that he, *i. e.* Jehovah, had the residue of the Spirit. In the New Testament, we find the same Almighty Agent preparing a body for the Saviour; filling Elizabeth with prophetic inspiration; revealing to Simeon that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ; descending in a bodily form, like a dove, at the Saviour's baptism; leading Jesus up into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil; prayed for by Christ and promised to his disciples, as a Paraclete or Comforter in their orphanage; conjoined with the Father and the Son in that initiatory rite of baptism to which all nations were to be made disciples; coming with a sound from heaven as

of a rushing mighty wind, filling the house where the little band of believers were, and appearing to them in cloven tongues, like as of fire, and sitting upon each of them on the day of Pentecost, thereby fulfilling the promise to the ancient Church recorded by Joel; vindicating his own insulted dignity by punishing Ananias and Sapphira with sudden death; catching away Philip, that the Ethiopian saw him no more; saying unto Peter, "Behold three men seek thee," thus opening to the Gentiles the gates of gospel privilege; separating unto himself Barnabas and Saul for the work of the ministry; forbidding Paul and Silas to preach the word in Asia, and not suffering them to go into Bythinia; witnessing in every city to him of Tarsus, that bonds and afflictions abided him; having made the elders of the Church at Ephesus overseers or bishops to feed the Church of God; saying by the mouth of Agabas, "so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles;" shedding abroad the love of God in our hearts; bearing witness with our spirits; helping our infirmities; making intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; as not to be grieved, nor quenched; anointing Christians in an abiding manner; bearing record in

heaven; speaking to the seven churches of Asia; blessing "the dead that die in the Lord;" and finally, inviting sinners to come and "take of the waters of life freely."

But not only do the actions ascribed to the Spirit convey the strongest ideas of personality of existence; the language used concerning him cannot be explained on any other hypothesis. For the sake of brevity I will confine myself to the words of the Saviour. When conversing with Nicodemus respecting regeneration, or the new birth, our Lord refers this process entirely to the Spirit. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." This declaration is worthy of a moment's investigation. "The wind bloweth where it listeth." The Greek word translated *Spirit*, signifies breath, or air; and we find this metaphor frequently used to denote the operations of the Spirit; it is also supposed to refer to the mode of his subsistence, usually called procession. Our Saviour goes on to clear the subject by this similitude, which at once declares the author, and describes the manner of spiritual regeneration—"Thou hearest the sound thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh or whither it

goeth." As the natural air is not under the power of man to send forth or restrain, so the Holy Ghost is as wind, in the freedom and sovereignty of his methods of operating on the human soul. And if we consider the magnitude of the change, the resistance it overcomes, the blessing it ensures, the ills from which it delivers, and the divine glory which it promotes, we well may conclude that nothing less than the same energy which created man's body can regenerate his spirit.

Another passage which speaks volumes on this subject, is that when the Lord Jesus said, "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world neither in the world to come." I shall not, my dear cousins, attempt to pronounce on the nature of the sin here spoken of; many theologians think it was confined to the primitive ages of the Church, and I trust we shall all be kept from that blindness of mind and reprobation of heart which it must have included; my object in quoting this context is to show what honour was put upon the Spirit by our Redeemer. His own sacred name might be reviled, his invitations rejected for a season; yea, his blood was imprecated to rest upon the

heads of those who witnessed his miracles of mercy, and they might be forgiven; but not so with any indignity offered to the Sanctifier: "it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world neither in the world to come."

But the point to which I would especially call your attention, is the legacy of the Spirit which the Lord Jesus bequeathed to his disciples before his death. In the economy of grace it had been ordained that the fulness of the Spirit should not be imparted during the Saviour's stay on earth: "the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." The announcement of the Redeemer's approaching death had filled his followers' hearts with sorrow, the bitterness of which we can hardly conceive of. Their ambitious dreams of earthly grandeur dissipated; their souls rent with grief at the anticipated sufferings of their Lord; their timid fears excited at the probable danger to themselves; their ancient ties of Jewish sympathy so rudely broken; they seemed "of all men most miserable." Their pitying Master promised them the Comforter, told them that it was expedient for them that he should go away; for if he went not away the Comforter would not come. This Spirit of truth was to guide them into all truth; for he was not to speak of himself—he was to

receive of Christ's, and show it unto the disciples. How great must he be whose coming would outweigh the advantages of the bodily presence of the Saviour! And how differently did the apostles speak and act after his holy effusions had been communicated to them! But the last instance of the Saviour's bearing witness to the personality of the Spirit which I shall adduce, is found in the baptismal formula, as instituted just before our Lord's ascension. How solemn the annunciation—"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations."—What? Why that the Holy Ghost is a Divine Person, united with the Father, the fountain of Deity, self-existent, omnipotent, every where present—and with the Son, whom all men were to honour even as they honoured the Father; the man that is Jehovah's fellow; the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person—in that great work of man's redemption from sin, of which the sacrament of baptism was the symbol and the seal. The book of Acts, the Epistles, and the Apocalyptic visions of John bear me out in my estimate of the significance of the announcements we have been reviewing. Think, my dear cousins, of three thousand converted in one day, from cruel enemies, who had joined in the cry of

"Crucify him! crucify him!" to zealous, self-denying disciples! Think of the change wrought in Saul of Tarsus when he had been "filled with the Holy Ghost," from the state of that untiring animosity which "persecuted this way unto the death!" Consider the churches established, the Gentiles evangelized, the canon of New Testament Scripture completed, and we shall indeed confess that "the ministration of the Spirit is glorious." Nor have his blessed influences ceased with the miraculous displays of power which were peculiar to the earlier Christians; his work still continues to be the sanctification of believers, uniting them to Christ in their effectual calling; being still the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, so that it may be truly said, "If a man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature." The effusions of mercy from this Spirit have at times been intermitted; but at this period of light and privilege, and in this happy country, favoured with so many indications of his presence, there is abundant evidence that Christians, "by one Spirit, are all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free, and have all been made to drink into one Spirit." At times these manifestations have been more general than at others. Something like a Pentecostal outpouring has

been displayed, and while sinners have been awakened, believers have been revived in their languishing graces, and taught to "do their first works:" these seasons are called revivals of religion, and under their blessed influence many are "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." Thus, my dear cousins, have I endeavoured to give you some faint idea of the person, work, and dignity of "the Eternal Spirit;" the third subsistence in the adorable Trinity. The theme is too vast to be exhausted by finite labour, too deep to be fathomed by finite intellect. But let us not reject the doctrine because we cannot fully comprehend it; rather let us rejoice for the consolation it is fitted to communicate. That we may all experience "the kindness and love of God our Saviour," "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy," that he may save us, "by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost," is the fervent prayer of your affectionate cousin,

HERBERT LINDSAY.

LETTER VII.

MABEL HARCOURT TO MRS. LINDSAY.

Magnolia Grove.

My Dear Aunt:—You will, I fear, be surprised at my long silence, but I deferred writing till I could give you a more definite account of my sister's real situation, as respects her disease. My father had become so much dissatisfied with the medical treatment of the family physician, that he brought home with him one of the most celebrated doctors from S——, to hear his opinion of her case.

Dr. Smith at once opened my father's eyes to the danger Edith was in, though he by no means considered her symptoms as absolutely hopeless. An entire new course of applications was commenced; among which repeated blistering was made use of. This was so painful and annoying to her, that for the time it seemed to make her worse, and all of us younger ones voted Dr. Smith a barbarian; and wished for our good old doctor back again, who let her do what she liked, and never troubled her with blisters. But, wonderful to relate, her cough is certainly better; and though very weak, she suffers less with pain in her side, and restlessness.

During this long interval, I have had less opportunity for talking and reading with Edith than before, because often she was unable, from pain and irritation, to listen to me; and because my poor mother was overcome by the knowledge of her child's peril, and sunk under it so much as to be confined altogether to her room, and require much of my attendance. But then Edith had her father, who took my place in her room, whenever my mother needed me; and his fine mind and clear views of Divine truth, would no doubt more than compensate for the want of my poor services. Your letters, too, were her constant companions, whenever she was able to command herself; and so have been her Bible, Doddridge's Rise and Progress, Dabell's Hymns, &c. Herbert's essay she did not, I think, sufficiently appreciate—but do not tell him so, for I did appreciate it—and when it recalled some of your arguments on the same subject, I could hardly refrain from a few selfish tears at the thought of my far away distance from dear Violet Vale.

But to return from this digression. I ought to tell you, that while I was busy with my mother, an old coloured woman who is very dear to us all—aunt Nelly—was often called upon to be with my sister. Aunt Nelly is an

excellent creature, a warm Methodist; and, I believe, a sincere and consistent Christian. This will explain what I am about to relate.

Last night Edith said, "You must write to our dear aunt Mabel; I know she is waiting for a letter before we can get any more of her precious instructions." "Well," returned I, "but what am I to say to her about you?" "Tell her, dear Mabel, that I am seeking, but have not yet found that peace I desire. Then some Christians have such a bright experience to relate; while I can say nothing more than 'Lord be merciful to me a sinner!' And there is another thing, but I do not like to speak of it, for I am sure Herbert would despise me for being so weak; but I am so puzzled about those awfully mysterious decrees, that I do not know what to think about the offers of salvation in reference to them." I assured her that Herbert and you would never despise the humble inquirer after truth; as for the bright experience she talked of, I thought aunt Nelly's conversation had been the cause of that difficulty; and while I was willing to admit the worth, and even intelligence of the woman, for one of her class, still she appeared to me by no means a safe guide in religious matters. This much, however, dear aunt, is certain; Edith's patience and fortitude

grow with every fresh occasion that calls them forth; and though she may be perplexed by questions and fears, I do think the work of God is going on in her heart. I asked her why she had not told my father of her difficulties. "Dear sister," she replied, "you know how dearly we all love him, and I do not want to say a word that might savour of disrespect, but indeed I do not think father has so good a way with young beginners as my aunt has. Every thing seems so clear to him, that he cannot make allowance for my dulness and want of light; and then you know he always laments that he cannot speak on these subjects to his own family, as well as to those about whom he is less interested." So dear aunt, you see that though far off, your words find their way to the heart of our poor invalid. She says, too, that she finds after all that the idea of recovery has more weight than she supposed it had; and that instead of settling her mind to decide the question of her acceptance with God, her thoughts will wander off in anticipation of travelling, restored health, and a return to her former employments. But if she is still desponding, there is one rejoicing. Miss Green seems as if she had now found the "one thing needful," and the transformation effected is wonderful to behold. But my paper is

full and crossed; so dear aunt, farewell! in haste your own child,

MABEL HARCOURT.

Having written to Herbert, I only send him our kind love.

LETTER VIII.

MRS. LINDSAY TO MABEL HARCOURT.

Violet Vale.

My Dear Mabel:—As the sick neighbour mentioned by Herbert continued to require my attendance, I awaited a letter from you before I pursued my subject; and glad I am that I did so, as I should not otherwise have known the precise nature of the difficulties in your sister's mind. That referring to the decrees of God being inconsistent with the invitations of the gospel, I will attempt to answer some other time, and confine myself to the one as regards "a bright experience." Here I must remark first, that there is in the new or spiritual life a great diversity of actings and feelings. The evidences of vitality are one time much more striking than at other times. Take two young animals, of which one is naturally strong and robust, fed with wholesome nutriment, and supplied with

every invigorating influence of atmosphere and sunshine; while another originally feeble, is dwarfed by starvation, stunted by neglect, and restricted from the genial air and healthful day: will not the growth of the former far outgo that of the latter? And yet life is in both, and the strength of the principle is in the direct ratio of the resistance overcome. So in the life of faith: some are joyful all their days, even in adverse circumstances, while others groan, being burthened; and yet the state of these poor sighing mourners is as sure and as safe as that of their triumphant neighbours; nay, perhaps more so.

Again, there are often mistakes made as to the true nature of the evidence of regeneration. Many date their Christian life from dreams, visions, voices, which at best are of doubtful interpretation, and neglect those marks that are laid down in the Word of God. I do not say that this is the case with aunt Nelly, whose worth I am well acquainted with; but even admitting this, my dear Edith must remember that the sanguine temperament of the coloured race has its effect in lending to their religion much of that ardour and love of excitement by which they are characterized: add to this the peculiar tenets of the Church to which Nelly belongs, where great stress is laid on a glowing account

of spiritual attainments, and you will see at once that there is likely to be a strong bias in her mind towards enthusiasm, and the display of spiritual graces. Many in her communion profess to be "happy," who can give but little reason for the feeling. May it not be an equally strong evidence of our religion, that we are doubtful of ourselves, and aware of the deceitful nature of the human heart? The sentence which by Mabel's account is expressive of your condition, was, when uttered by the Publican, considered by our Saviour a more hopeful sign than the loud professions and boastful self eulogiums of the Pharisee. And the more we are convinced of the utter worthlessness of our best services, the higher will we prize that finished salvation which Christ offers to our acceptance. Joy is doubtless one of the fruits of the Spirit, and alike the Christian's privilege and duty; but sometimes this emotion is withheld for a time, that we may not be puffed up with spiritual pride, or think that our progress is greater than it really is. The sun shines just as clearly in the storms of December as in the spring-time of May, though the difference of the earth's position, and the intervening clouds prevent our feeling it so sensibly: so the Sun of Righteousness may be shining on our hearts, though as

yet we have not caught the full radiance of his vivifying beams.

Now for a word or two on the other perplexity. The invitations of the Saviour are universal. "Go ye into *all the world* and preach the gospel *to every creature*." "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Now, if any poor sinner venture on this warrant to put in a plea for mercy, we have the best authority for believing that he will not be rejected. "Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room," is still as true as when first uttered. "Whosoever will, let him take of the waters of life *freely*." "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he *that hath no money;* come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, *without money and without price*." To all these invitations, add the consideration of the love which led our Saviour to those acts of obedience and suffering necessary to be done before the right of admission could be given; for here, as at the feast of old, the wedding garment is provided for the guests. We are told "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Here, then, with this "unspeakable gift" of the Father, the willing sacrifice of the Son, and the effu-

sion promised of the Holy Spirit, is there not encouragement for all to apply for the benefits of salvation?

But you reply—"If all are not elected, and only the elect can be saved, what is the use of applying, unless we know that we are of that favoured number?" To this I answer, that the decrees of election are not known, or to be made known in this world, except as they are verified in the renewed heart and evangelical life of Christians. The Apostle tells the Ephesians that they "were by nature children of wrath even as others;" how could they tell they were elected, before they were "quickened," or made alive, "together with Christ?" Was there any indication, think you, that would distinguish betwen them and other Gentiles? The Apostle speaking of their former condition, says, "Wherefore remember, that ye being in times past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands: that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." There is but one name given "under heaven" and "among men whereby we must be saved;" and faith in that name is the

only appropriating medium whereby we may partake in the benefits of salvation. We are not to be judged by God's secret purpose, but by "the deeds done in the body." And even if we come at a venture, like the lepers to the abandoned camp of the Syrians, or as the sentiment in the hymn suggests,

> "I can but perish if I go,
> I am resolved to try;
> For if I stay away, I know
> I shall for ever die"—

if we come in the name of Christ we shall receive a welcome; "for" said he, "whosever cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." Then dear girl, instead of trying to unravel those "secret things which belong to God," let me beg of you to "make your own calling and election sure," by believing on the Saviour, and "walking in him." The enemy of God and man often employs these high doctrines, to perplex the minds of the seekers after religion; that they may be drawn off from the first and primary question, "What must I do to be saved?" As you increase in knowledge, many things will be made plain, that now seem mysterious; and with our limited acquaintance with these subjects, we cannot expect to clear up all mysteries, till we reach the upper sanctuary. Till then, let us

receive every truth contained in Scripture, in the beautiful order and symmetry there observed: and as inspiration cannot contradict itself, let us rather mistrust our own powers, than reject a tenet clearly deducible from a source so exalted. We must remember also, that God's fore-ordination does not interfere with man's free agency; I will illustrate my meaning from the calling of Zaccheus. We cannot doubt but that it was part of God's plan, that this man should be converted; and yet there is not the slightest appearance of coercion or violence. He went to see Jesus, apparently from curiosity only; yet was the Saviour's call so efficacious, as to bring "salvation to his house," and cause the most thorough reformation in his practice. Often has it been realized in the experience of Christians,

"That those who went to scoff, remained to pray."

And why was such an one awakened by a message, heard by persons similarly situated, with perfect indifference? Because God the Spirit in one case applied the truth, and not in the other. But to return to Zaccheus; in his case the blessing of being in the path of Christ, the means of salvation, is very evident, even if his motive were of a low and worldly kind. So

dear child, "acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee." Be not discouraged in your heavenly course, when you least expect it, the Beloved will reveal himself to your soul. But I must close this long letter. Farewell! From your affectionate aunt,

ELLEN LINDSAY.

LETTER IX.

FROM MRS. LINDSAY TO EDITH HARCOURT.

Violet Vale.

My Dear Niece:—In my last, I spoke of the free invitations given to sinners in Scripture; but from them, we must not imagine that the life of religion is one of inactivity and sloth. Thus we hear of the "strait gate, and narrow way;" that "the kingdom of heaven is gotten by force, and they that thrust men, take it," (*margin*), and we are directed to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." The Apostle tells the Philippians, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Here the precept is direct—work—that is, labour, use exertion, be in earnest in your endeavours;

for—and O! what a consolation is this—"it is God that worketh in you;" his Spirit originates every holy emotion, and strengthens every languid desire. In the spiritual world, as in the temporal, "the hand of the diligent maketh rich." Then let me beg of you to be "a doer of the word" as James phrases it, "and not a forgetful hearer only." "The engrafted word," as the same Apostle styles it, is in the hands of the Holy Spirit the means of a soul's conversion. How important then, for those who are in health, to frequent the house of God, where this word is preached, and to "search the Scriptures" with diligence and care. There is unspeakable comfort, in every state of mind and body, to be drawn from Holy Writ. Here we find the sweetest strains of poetry, the most eloquent descriptions, the most vivid imagery, the most forcible reasoning, the sublimest ethics, the most instructive biography, the most interesting history, the deepest tragedy, and the most ecstatic visions of future bliss. This book gives not only an account of the origin of our race, and the transactions most important in the annals of man, but it reveals to us our future destination, and points on the one hand, to the joys of heaven, on the other, warns us of the pains of hell. How important then, that this

blessed Bible should be the man of our counsels! Yes, let me be called the student of one book, if that book be the Scriptures—the woman with one idea, if that idea be salvation through the blood of the Lamb! You will find it, my dear Edith, a good way, to read, statedly and continuously, the pages of inspiration. For upwards of thirty years, it has been my plan to divide the Bible into portions of about forty verses each; which enables me to complete its perusal in two years: so that from my own experience, I can speak of the benefits arising from this systematic method. Prayer is a still more necessary aliment to the young disciple, it is indeed,

> "The Christian's vital breath,
> The Christian's native air."

I doubt not, but that already you have realized the benefit of this communing with your God, pleading his promises, acknowledging his mercies, confessing your sins, and imploring his forgiveness. True it is, that there is not always the same freedom in our access to the throne of grace. Wandering thoughts, and foolish imaginations too often break in upon the most sacred acts of our devotions. But be not discouraged, when perfumed by the incense of our Advocate's intercession, your service will be accept-

ed; "for him the Father heareth always." There is one suggestion I would here make, my beloved girl—early accustom yourself to the practice of social prayer. I do not mean to encourage a false confidence, or unbecoming boldness; but with your sisters and young associates, take every prudent opportunity to confess your Saviour in this particular. If this habit be not acquired in youth, it is seldom adopted in later years; and though fluency in prayer is no test of piety, still it is often a great comfort to those at whose sick-beds our sex is so often called to minister, that we should be able to offer up our supplications in their behalf. For wives and mothers, the gift of prayer is very important, as it gives them an influence which no other talent or faculty can impart. Closely allied to the study of the Scriptures, and the practice of prayer, is the observance of the Sabbath. This may well be called, "the pearl of days," the jubilee of the soul. In it, we lay aside our worldly employments and pleasures, to devote to God the consecrated hours. In public worship, in reading, meditation, and prayer, in Sabbath-school and Bible-class instruction, there is ample variety of employment. Even for those who, like you, are debarred from the services of the sanctuary, how much is there that is soothing

and consoling, in the appropriate duties of the day! What a happy foretaste does it afford of that "rest or Sabbatism that remaineth for the children of God!" And how should those to whom the earthly day of rest is a weariness, take heed lest death find them alike averse to, and unprepared for, the worship of that place

> "Where the assembly ne'er breaks up,
> The Sabbath ne'er shall end."

May you and I make a part of this great company, my dear niece! Ever your affectionate aunt,

ELLEN LINDSAY.

LETTER X.

MABEL HARCOURT TO MRS. LINDSAY.

Magnolia Grove.

Joy! joy! my dear aunt! Will you not rejoice with us, that there is hope for the body, as well as light for the soul? My dear Edith was much interested in your last two letters, and I could not but hope that they would have the effect of confirming her evidences of acceptance in the Saviour; when to my great delight, I was informed by my father, that he had met with a clergyman on the way to Cuba, (where his phy-

sician had ordered him to spend the winter,) and being much pleased with his manners and appearance, had asked him to spend a few days at his house. This indeed proved a visit of mercy to my sister. The similarity of their circumstances increased her interest in his conversation, and he was so patient with her objections, so simple in his language, and so evangelical in his views, that one by one, all her doubts vanished, and she rejoiced "in hope of the glory of God." Such has been the reaction of the mind, on the corporeal system, that every good symptom has increased, while her nervous restlessness has proportionably diminished; and she has become able to ride out daily, which has the best effect on her appetite and sleeping. The delight which her convalescence has occasioned, I leave you to imagine. All the children are overjoyed to be once more admitted to her room; and my mother cannot sufficiently express her gratitude, that her treasure has been restored to her. With Miss Green, it is a source of constant thankfulness, that while both have received spiritual benefit, the life so dear to her has been restored. But to no one is it more a matter of transport than to my brother Edwin. It seems that a revival of religion had occurred in his college a short time before his return home

for the vacation, by which he was much impressed. But on his arrival at the paternal mansion, he resolved to throw aside all melancholy thoughts, and enjoy himself as usual. To all these determinations, however, he found it impossible to adhere; the sight of his sister's sufferings, the change in Miss Green, and the subdued state of the family at large, prevented him from banishing his convictions as he intended, and even before poor Edith could see her way clearly, he, with his usual ardour, was exulting in his Saviour. But I have not yet spoken of my father. It is delightful to see him surrounded by his children, when he casts aside the cares of his engrossing profession, and participates in our conversation, or joins with his sonorous manly voice, in our hymns of praise. To my poor exertions to promote the family comfort, he attributes vastly more merit than they deserve; and the other day he placed on my finger a ring, which had belonged to his mother, and said, "I am not in favour of ornaments, Mabel, for young Christians, but this is a memento long cherished, and given as a mark of my approbation. Should you ever wish to ask a favour from your father, place that in his hand and you can scarcely be refused." "Thank you, dear father," I replied, "perhaps some day I

may indeed require my talisman; till then, I will guard the diamond from vulgar eyes, and wear it next my heart." Apropos to ornaments—dear aunt, will you in your next give us your ideas on that subject? Edwin has taken a great liking to Henry Harrison, the poor boy I mentioned as so attentive to Miss Green's instructions in the Bible class. This youth is a friendless orphan, excepting that Mr. Morton has been very kind to him, and allowed him to participate in the instructions which the family received from Miss Green; Edwin has been teaching him Latin, ever since his return home, and declares him to be a boy of uncommon talent. He is very anxious that my father should assist his young protegé to obtain a classical education; and for this purpose, has offered to relinquish a part of his allowance, and even sell his horse, which has been such a favourite with him.

"He seems so pious," said the young advocate the other day; "and will make a capital preacher."

"Thereby spoiling a good blacksmith," returned my father; "but I cannot refuse you just now, if the demand is any thing reasonable; so we will send the boy to school for a year, and see how he behaves. Remember, I promise nothing further, till we have an opportunity of

judging of his abilities, as well as his conduct, for I have no idea of encouraging a blockhead to mount the pulpit, if he is ever so good." Edwin made suitable acknowledgments to my father, and then hastened to tell Henry, whose gratitude seemed to know no bounds. Miss Morton—the same young lady that likes to arrange her curls—begged to know whether you thought a person might not be a good Christian and yet attend places of public amusement; and Edwin says he wishes Herbert would write something for him about revivals: so you see there are plenty of questions for you both to answer.

Farewell, my dear aunt; let not distance either of time or space make you and Herbert forget your affectionate niece

MABEL HARCOURT.

LETTER XI.

MRS. LINDSAY TO MABEL HARCOURT.

Violet Vale.

My Dearest Mabel:—The tidings contained in your last, are indeed joyful ones, and called forth the warmest emotions of gratitude in both Her-

bert and myself. What responsibility devolves on those of your number who have been permitted to enjoy a hope so full of immortality as that of the gospel!

But I hasten to reply to some of the inquiries which your letter contains, and will begin with that relative to dress and ornaments.

Before we commence this subject, which has attracted the attention of so large a portion of mankind, as well as womankind, let me remind you of its origin. As the child's hymn expresses it,

> "The art of dress did ne'er begin,
> Till Eve, our mother, learned to sin"—

Should not this consideration teach us the folly, yea, even criminality of those who attach so much importance, and expend so much time and money on this standing memorial of the fall? The love of dress seems to have been one of woman's besetments from a very early period. Deborah represents Sisera's mother as expecting among the spoils of her son "a prey of divers colours, a prey of divers colours of needlework, of divers colours of needlework on both sides:" and Isaiah describes the wardrobes of the daughters of Zion in the most graphic manner. "In that day the Lord will take away the bravery (in the old English sense, finery) of the ankle-

bands, and the cauls (or caps of net work) and the crescents, or little moons. The pendants and the bracelets, and the veils, the caps, and the ankle-chains, and the girdles, and the houses of breath (meaning probably perfume boxes, or smelling bottles, worn at the girdle) and the amulets, the rings, and the nose-jewels, the holiday dresses, and the mantles, and the robes, and the purses, the mirrors, and the tunics, and the turbans, and the veils." (The veil here spoken of is supposed to be the large one covering all the other garments, and therefore differing from the smaller one mentioned before.)—*Alexander's version.* Of all these decorations, the Jewish women were to be deprived, as a punishment for their haughtiness and pride.

It was this tendency to love of dress, which induced the Quakers to lay down regulations for the apparel of their members. But it may be doubted whether their method was a good one; as much vanity may lurk under a plain bonnet, as shines out in plumes and artificials; and Quaker silks and linens were always remarkable for the fineness of their texture. Indeed, the fact that both this denomination, and that of the Methodists, have virtually abandoned this part of their system, seems to prove that it has

not worked advantageouly. Nor is it easy to lay down laws which shall be of universal obligation, on a point like this; where slovenliness or eccentricity is as much to be shunned as the other extreme of costliness and show. But the Christian has a rule, which must include every particular of conduct, and what does it say?

"And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field how they grow."

"Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things!"

"Be not conformed to this world."

"Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth."

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

"I will therefore, in like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shame-facedness and sobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works."

"Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is

not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

"Love not the world, neither the things which are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

The first, sixth and seventh of these texts, explicitly condemn over carefulness, or unnecessary expense in dress. Doubtless, the Apostle may have had reference to some idolatrous practices, in some of his directions; but the scope of the whole, assuredly is, to discourage outward adorning:"—while the third precept, though originally called forth by an ill-judged attention to household cares, may well be applied to many a daughter of Eve, whose dress is too much conformed to this world, and who alloweth herself many things which her sober judgment must condemn. Of a similar spirit, is the last quotation, which as an inordinate love of dress is plainly the love of the world, declares that the love of the Father is incompatible with it. Then for the fifth, that comprehensive rule of Christian action—how can an extravagant or elaborate style of attire fulfil its requisition? We are told by the Apostle, speaking to the Corinthians, "For ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit,

which are God's." Is the decking out, and pampering of the body, the best means of promoting the glory of God? Or is "the temple of the Holy Ghost" to be made a shrine for self-idolatry, and the gratification of vanity? But this subject assumes fresh interest, from the idea of stewardship in the Christian life. The mere outlay of money, though far from the only evil, appears in this day of the Church's necessities, almost like defrauding the Lord's treasury of what is there so much required, to be lavished in the low and degrading indulgence of personal embellishment. The Apostle appears to hint at this—but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works; as much as to say, that a love of dress will lead to disbursements, that might better be employed in works of charity. This, however, will come in view, when discussing the consecration of our substance to the Lord; a branch of Christian morals which I propose to enlarge on, hereafter. Let us therefore, throwing aside all estimate of pecuniary cost, look at the other effects of this debasing tendency. What uneasy feelings if surpassed by others; what a dread of wearing any thing unfashionable or common; what fear lest our habiliments might be injured by a polluting touch? Would that this were all!

What meanness and almost dishonesty is sometimes practised to obtain distinction in dress; and what desecration of sacred things, when the hours of public worship are employed in making out an inventory of our neighbour's dress!

Do not, however, suppose that I wish you to be careless of your person, or indifferent to neatness, and even correct taste, in your dress. The exhortation, "provide things honest in the sight of all men," must not be forgotten; and while mankind judges so much by externals, it is not doing justice to ourselves to neglect our appearance. Among the excellencies of Solomon's virtuous woman, it is recorded, "She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with double garments, (*margin*). She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple." As my experience on this subject is limited, not having been blessed with daughters of my own, I applied to my friend Mrs. Beauchamp, (who, as you well know, has tenderly reared a large family of girls) for her sentiments on this difficult point. She replied as follows: "It is indeed no easy matter to map out a prescribed system, for the regulation of a young lady's dress. The love of pleasing is so much a tendency of

our nature, that we are prone to extremes in its indulgence. I never wished to mortify my children, by clothing them otherwise, than as their station seemed to demand; but a great deal may be done to discourage a love of finery, and to direct the attention to higher objects. Then there are particulars which may be laid hold of, while the whole appearance is neat and even fashionable. Thus, not one of my numerous progeny while under my care, ever had a ruffle round their dresses, wore a feather, or an artificial flower outside the bonnet: face-flowers as they are called, have crept in, I acknowledge. Then as to jewelry, rings are such ancient symbols, and so necessary to the young engagée, that I could not altogether banish them; and breast-pins have an appearance of utility; but ear rings I never tolerated, always declaring that the nose-jewel was required to complete the set."

Let me advise you, my dear child, against a slavish adherence to fashion. Never be the first to adopt a novelty in dress, and never countenance one which is inimical to modesty or injurious to health. Always dress within your means, and never run in debt for an article of clothing. The paltry pleasure of display is dearly purchased by the moral degradation inseparable from the idea of wearing what cannot

be truly said to be your own. Akin to this is the school-girl practice of borrowing dresses, collars, &c. from their companions. These precautions duly taken, I own that I love to see a youthful form in a garb well suited to its age and class, and in conformity with the rules of taste and elegance, always remembering that

> ——— "loveliness
> Needs not the foreign aid of ornament,
> But is, when unadorned, adorned the most."

Would that mothers of the present day were as anxious to secure for their children the spotless robe of the Redeemer's righteousness, as they are to obtain for them that outward decoration which may attract attention, and gratify maternal vanity, by calling forth the praises of beholders! When I have seen some of these over-dressed little puppets, it reminded me of victims garlanded for sacrifice; and how often are the best and purest feelings of woman's nature debased and turned aside by the propensity thus early inculcated!

There is deep irony in that work of Carlyle's, which represents our species as a clothes-wearing animal; and too many seem to forget that those bodies we cherish and adorn so fondly, will soon be left to moulder in corruption; while the jewels contained in these caskets of clay will

either glitter in the Redeemer's diadem for ever, or be "consumed of the fire;" and called "reprobate silver, because the Lord hath rejected them." Before I conclude this long homily—too long perhaps already for your patience—I would direct your attention to an evil in which expenditure in dress and subservience to fashion involve their less wealthy votaries. I mean the absorbing desire to rival those whose means are more ample in the richness of their appearance; thus sacrificing time, and giving the first place in their minds to a pursuit so secondary in its importance! If they succeed by their ingenuity in trimming and stitching, they are called good economists, whereas they are more lavish in time—that most valuable commodity—than those whose wealth allows the aid of milliners and dressmakers. How much to be honoured is that independence of mind which is not ashamed of an appearance in accordance with one's circumstances, and which, without a breach of the tenth commandment, can bear the scrutinizing glance of the fashionable belle in all her trickery!

Think not, by these latter remarks, that I would discourage that ingenuity and taste which enable some young ladies to arrange their wardrobe to the best advantage, or that I would undervalue the use of the needle. It is only an

undue extreme I would warn you against; as for sewing, I know too well its sedative, quieting effects on restless irritability and excited nerves, not to appreciate an employment so purely feminine. Nor would I utterly condemn that ornamental use of the needle to which so much time is given. Worsted work is better than scandal, and crochet knitting much to be preferred to entire idleness. But for rational beings, plain sewing—especially if the social circle be enlivened by conversation, or charmed with the reading aloud of some good author, by one of the party—presents a resource and a gratification, which none, save a woman, can rightly understand. But I must bring my interminable letter to a close. Herbert begs leave to suggest that his last letter remains unanswered; he unites with me in love to all your circle, not forgetting the dear convalescent. Your affectionate aunt,

ELLEN LINDSAY.

LETTER XII.

EDWIN HARCOURT TO MRS. LINDSAY.

Magnolia Grove.

My Dear Aunt:—It does not seem to me quite fair that Mabel should engross you and my

cousin so completely, and I therefore announced to her my intention of answering your last letter to her myself. I should have preferred writing to Herbert, but I cannot induce her to show me his letters, though what he can have to say to her of so mysterious a nature I know not. Besides, your strictures on dress, though very excellent for girls, do not apply to the nobler sex; however, I will hold a conversation with you in the only way our distance allows, if only to thank you for the pains you have taken with our "amiable eldest"—who did not always deserve the epithet—as well as for the interest you have shown in our welfare, both spiritual and temporal. I fear you will put down the paper in disgust at your rattle-brained correspondent; but dear aunt, do bear with me. I am in such spirits that I fear they run away with me; for had you seen the change in our family, you would not wonder at my elevation. When I returned, soon after Mabel's arrival, all was melancholy, apprehension, and gloom; now every face is clothed in smiles, every heart shouts aloud with gladness. Nor is our mirth "as the crackling of thorns under a pot;" the least of our mercies is the recovered health of our sweet Edith, and that is no trifling one, to those who love her so dearly; though cast in the

shade by the spiritual benefits which accompany it. How poor, how insignificant do earthly things appear when contrasted with things eternal! With what different feelings shall I return to my studies! I left college determined in my opposition to holy things, and hoping to escape from the torment of my own convictions: I return to it triumphing in my precious Redeemer. I hope you are interested about Henry. So far, he stands the ordeal to admiration, and I am not afraid that he will falsify my partial predictions. I hope next vacation to see cousin Herbert here. Will not you and he pay us a visit? just to rub up the acquaintance with us younger ones.

But I was never famed for writing long letters, and this epistle is addressed to one whom I hardly remember, in appearance at least. Pray put my cousin in mind of what he is to tell me about revivals, and believe me your affectionate nephew,

EDWIN HARCOURT.

P. S.—Mabel thinks this rather a poor specimen of my epistolary powers; but I shall send it, nevertheless. Perhaps I shall improve in my correspondence if you will only try me a little while; but I tell you what it is, not every young man is as good and as talented as Herbert. I

mean to study at college as hard as rocks, and above all to endeavour to keep up my consistency as a Christian; for the communion is to be held next Sabbath, and we shall have the privilege of sitting down together at the table of the Lord. Happily, my room-mate is an old, steady disciple, and the late revival has altered the face of things in college. Once more, farewell!

LETTER XIII.

MRS. LINDSAY TO EDWIN HARCOURT.

Violet Vale.

My Dear Nephew:—So far from laying "down the paper in disgust," I felt very glad to receive your short, though welcome letter; and as the office of lecturer seems to be given me by common consent, I will send you a few hints as to your demeanour in college. This is at all times a trying place for the young, where often, too often, "shipwreck is made of a good conscience," and all the precious lessons of home are forgotten or disregarded; but it is especially dangerous for one like you, of ardent temperament, inexperienced, and rich. Nor do you return there as you left it; you are now a professor of reli-

gion, and in this character your influence will be highly beneficial, or decidedly injurious. I rejoice in the determination you avow to endeavour after consistency, and doubt not but that the decided piety of your room-mate will materially assist you in preserving the Christian name untarnished; still I must inform you that all human strength is perfect weakness, and that without the aid of a higher power, your best resolutions will avail but little. Be humble, then, in the estimate of your own ability to withstand temptation, and seek in prayer that assistance which you need to maintain your integrity.

Let me entreat you to be cautions what company you keep; the boon companion, the comic jester, and the dissipated associate will rejoice if by any means they can entice you to share in their convivial meetings, and it is only by a firm but modest determination that you will be enabled to escape their devices to lead you from the path of duty. At once take your stand with the steady and zealous professors of religion; remembering that "he that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." Let every means of grace find in you a faithful participator, and never be ashamed of the name of Christian.

Temperance societies have done much for

young men, in the present day, appealing as they do, to that social principle which is so often misapplied to the destruction of youth, and giving courage by the power of numbers, to each individual member. Join, therefore, one of these associations, that is, if you have moral firmness enough to adhere to their requisitions; for a broken pledge is an evidence of weakness, almost hopeless. As you seemed to think that my former letter on dress and ornaments did not apply to the *ruder* sex, I will here enlarge on an idea therein adverted to, which certainly belongs to the class of masculine duties—I mean the consecration of substance to the Lord. This principle was distinctly recognized in the Old Testament Church, in the tithes and offerings which were then enjoined; and we cannot doubt that it is still binding on the conscience, though differing in its application. Nor are the objects now to be promoted, less important than in the days of the Mosaic ritual. If the tabernacle then demanded the contributions of the faithful, have not we laid upon us the high behest of going into all the world and preaching the gospel to every creature? Were the Hebrews directed, "take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite, as long as thou livest upon the earth;" and have not we the

precept, "that the labourer is worthy of his hire?" Time will not permit me to discuss this subject as its importance requires; I merely wish to call your attention to it, as to a truth which the church is only beginning to comprehend and obey, but which is intimately connected with millennial glory. "The silver and the gold is the Lord's," and when "a pure offering" shall be poured into the treasury of the Church, there will no longer be complaints of debt and discouragement in our Missionary Societies, and other benevolent operations; but with united effort and ample means at command, the best resources will be brought to bear on the mighty fields that "are white already to harvest." The portion of their income which Christians are to give, must be left to their own convictions of duty. A tenth is clearly the least that will be accepted, and many no doubt ought to give in a larger ratio. If the Saviour's direction to "gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost," were combined with the prophet's exhortation, "seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not,"—how much unnecessary waste would be prevented, and how much happier and less cumbered would professors be! In the apportionment of your sacred fund, which I should advise you statedly to set

apart, at a given period, in accordance with the spirit of 1 Cor. xvi. 2, let me recommend first the support of the gospel in the congregation where you worship; next a contribution to all the Boards of the Church; not forgetting private almsgiving to worthy objects; nor omitting those more general modes of doing good, in which as a man and a citizen you are expected to co-operate. But I will not tire you with a longer lecture just now. Write often to me, or Herbert, or both; and be assured of the deep interest we take in your welfare. May you, while acquiring literary and classical attainments, "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen!"

Your affectionate aunt,

ELLEN LINDSAY.

LETTER XIV.

MABEL HARCOURT TO MRS. LINDSAY.

Magnolia Grove.

My Dear Aunt:—Edwin's letter informed you of the privilege which was graciously permitted us, at this eventful era in the family history. You and Herbert were wanting, or else my cup would have been full to overflowing.

Dr. Firmin, our good old minister, seemed to have renewed his age; and all the services were of the most solemn kind. His address to the young communicants, as they were called up round the pulpit, was most impressive; among the circle, our party—that is, Miss Green, Edith, Edwin and Henry Harrison—appeared to be deeply affected. I feared poor Edith would find the excitement too much for her strength, but she bore it better than I had expected. My mother felt able to attend, and her sweet, and still youthful looking face, contrasted well with my father's manly countenance, animated with delight, which was chastened by solemnity. Indeed the whole scene was worthy of a painter's hand. The white-haired pastor, with his low tremulous tones, and lifted hands, giving thanks to God that "his mercy is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;" the little cedar church with its simple neatness, that asked not the aid of paint or gilding; and the congregation comprising not only all the respectable families of the neighbourhood, but the usual proportion of coloured people, who always throng to the "big meetings," made a foreground to the picture, suiting well, with the glimpses through the windows and open doors,

of the tall shade trees, under which the horses and carriages were fastened; the creek flowing gently in the distance; and the spring, that favourite resort of children and nurses. When service was over, we returned through the deep woods, where silence reigned, in this time of sunshine and heat. Our hearts seemed too full for words, and little was said till we returned to the house. In the evening, as Edith and I were sitting together in our favourite little room, to which I used to give the imposing title of boudoir, old Nelly made her appearance. "Bless the Lord! my young misses," she exclaimed; "bless the Lord for his goodness! It did my old heart good to-day, to see master and mistress, and master Edwin, and you both, and the teacher, and that other young boy, all partaking together, at the Lord's table. Oh! my young misses, it is better to have a seat there, than to be in company with the grandest and the gayest." As you may suppose, we did not disdain the gratulations of this warm disciple; and I, for my part, felt humbled, as she went on, in her own peculiar style, and with the glowing enthusiasm of her race, to tell what the Lord had done for her soul.

I was much obliged to you, dear aunt, for your letter on dress. May Edith and I be

enabled to preserve the happy medium between foolish expenditure and indifference or slovenliness!

Maria Morton, the second daughter, seemed very attentive at the communion; and lately observed to me—"Julia's obstacle to piety, is her love of company and amusements; mine is a taste for novel reading. Perhaps, when your aunt tells my sister about the first, she will say something about my propensity also."—I shall myself be glad to have your opinion on this subject. Just now, it would be no sacrifice to me to relinquish all the range of fiction; but I know my father would be unwilling that his daughters should be ignorant of books, which have become "part and parcel," as he would say, of English literature—Shakspeare for instance. But I must bid you farewell, as I am quite busy preparing Edwin's things for his departure. Your praises of plain sewing came just in time to quicken my idle fingers; for, as you may remember, it was not my favourite pursuit, though, thanks to your instructions, I am much improved in the use of my needle. Dear fellow! I trust he may be kept from the temptations to which he is exposed. How favoured was Herbert's position, where the weekly return home brightened up every holy emotion, and

gave him strength for every trial! Yours, ever, my own dear aunt,

MABEL HARCOURT.

LETTER XV.

MRS. LINDSAY TO MABEL HARCOURT.

Violet Vale.

My Dear Mabel:—How gratifying it was to receive the details contained in your last, I need not tell you. Were but the impressions which such scenes suggest, as permanent as they are powerful, the question about amusements would be speedily answered! But I will reply to your query more systematically. Perhaps there is no amusement so fascinating to young people as dancing. From the time that the baby skirts are held out by the tiny hands, to figure in the polka, to the more matured taste for waltzes or quadrilles, it sometimes seems as if our sex were bitten by the tarantula; even health is pleaded as an argument in its behalf; and girls are sent to dancing-school, to polish their manners, and give grace to their persons. Perhaps this part of the subject is less exceptionable than any other; though there is little doubt that in these seminaries of Terpsichore, a foundation is often laid of infant vanity and incipient flirtation.

The great misfortune is that those who say A must say B also, and all the other letters. So the young lady, who has been taught to caper and pirouette at dancing-school, is anxious to display the accomplishment at balls and parties; where the lessons of coquetry imbibed at practicings with a baby partner, are extended and improved, with beaux and dandies. Then comes the long train of evils, physical and moral. The crowded assembly, fraught with mephitic gas; the whirl, the heat, the excitement of the dance; the sudden transition to the outer air; the exhausted frame, the midnight vigil, and the morning's lengthened slumbers; the pride of success, the mortification of neglect, the triumph over competitors, the lavishness of expense ill-afforded, or the consciousness of time misspent. In what state of mind is the excited belle, when the time comes for evening devotion? Is her mind, just passing from the frothy compliments, and foolish remarks of her companions, in a fit state to commune with her Maker? Would any of us wish to end our lives in a ball-room? Or could we deliberately implore Jehovah's blessing, ere we engage in such a pursuit? I know that some persons who will not go to public balls, yet patronize dancing in private parties; and think that a carpet on the floor, and the piano as

an accompaniment, so alter the face of things, as to take away all that is objectionable. To such, I would say, "taste not, touch not, handle not," lest the propensity should "grow with what it feeds upon." I admit that a graceful carriage, and an upright way of holding oneself, is very desirable; but Calisthenics might, I should suppose, answer all this purpose, without the danger of evil communication, and worldly associates. As regards the promotion of health, I will show you a more excellent way for the attainment of that most desirable object.

It is to be lamented, that in this country the idea of refinement should be thought to involve indolence. How useless, as a class, are the young ladies who aspire to be fashionable! Little do they realize, or prepare, for the cares and responsibilities of married life—their usual lot—and badly are they fitted to enact the parts of wives, mothers, or housekeepers. When the thoughtless girl marries, and plunges into the difficulties of domestic life, too often her health gives way, under the annoyances to which she is exposed; if not, her spirits or temper is almost sure to suffer; while her husband is too often mortified at omissions, that seriously interfere with his comfort, and that of his guests. The cure for all these difficulties, and the means of pro-

curing exercise tenfold more healthy than dancing, will be discovered in an early acquaintance with the old fashioned duty of family superintendence. How pleasant is it for a mother to receive aid in her many cares, from a young and active daughter, and how is the benefit repaid, by the skill and experience such assistance bestows!

For the recommendation of this branch of knowledge there is high authority. In the description of a virtuous woman it is especially enumerated among her excellencies, that "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness;" and the Apostle, when directing the conduct of young women, exhorts that they should "guide the house," or as in the parallel passage in Titus, that they be "keepers at home." Milton too, while detailing the charms of "all-accomplished Eve," tells us that

> ———"nothing lovelier can be found
> In woman, than to study household good:"

certainly nothing can be more necessary, in this country, where servants are so independent of their employers; and where so frequently the lady of the house is called on, to act as cook,

chambermaid, or nurse. Even in the slave States, a knowledge of housewifery is indispensable, to enable the mistress to detect omissions of duty. But I have rather digressed from the original subject of my remarks. Theatrical performances are so fascinating, that it perhaps requires a greater effort to relinquish them, than any other amusements. Yet is there none so deleterious; the mock prayers, the oaths, the immodest inuendoes, the exposure of person, the desecration of holy things, must shock the mind of delicacy and religion. And yet the theatre is called the school of morals. Fine morality! where parental authority is held up to derision, where the nuptial vow is so often trifled with, and the rant of bombast is substituted for wit or sentiment. Of course, the opera is no less to be condemned, though the allurements of music and attitudes are added to scenic decorations. Cards are deservedly viewed with detestation, by those who think that life has employments more obligatory than killing time; nor is back-gammon exempt from the difficulty of being also what is called a game of chance, though less frequently used for gambling transactions. Mason's Essay on the use of the Lot, in the Christian Magazine, will place this branch

of amusement in an aspect which cannot be attractive to a tender conscience.

Happy is it for you, my beloved girl, that you have learned to find pleasure in pursuits so widely different from those I have been reviewing; and that you have been taught the truth of the wise man's declaration:—"Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandize of it is better than the merchandize of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies; and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is every one that retaineth her." How often is this declaration literally fulfilled, in the health, prosperity, and reputation with which consistent piety presents its followers; and if, for wise purposes the Lord afflicts them with the loss of any of these blessings, how cheerfully can they, with their Father's favour, forego the choicest good which earth can give. One of the greatest sources of mischief, belonging to a love of amusement, consists in the dis-

gust "for all the dull pursuits of civil life" which it induces. The affairs of every-day existence, the employments of home, the improvement of the mind, appear to the votary of pleasure, vapid and uninteresting occupations; and these persons resemble those who have been fed on the richest dainties, till the taste for wholesome aliment is lost. Viewed from a deathbed, or the climes of glory, the glare and tinsel of earthly pleasures are seen in their true colours, as worthless and dearly bought; unlike the simple, yet heartfelt satisfaction, accompanying the steady, faithful discharge of our oft recurring duties, which turns them into enjoyments.

But I must not let my love of lecturing carry me too far for your patience to follow me. May we, my dear child, never be classed with those who are "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God;" lest we verify the irony of the wise man, "Rejoice O young man in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth; and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou that for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment." Thus prays your affectionate aunt,

ELLEN LINDSAY.

LETTER XVI.

MRS. LINDSAY TO MABEL HARCOURT.

Violet Vale.

My Dear Mabel:—Having in my last, given you my opinion of the fashionable amusements of the day, I now will consider your other question, about novel-reading. This most fascinating kind of literature is now, by means of the cheap mode of printing, made more prevalent than at any former period. The steamboats, and railroad cars, are besieged by a crowd of urchins, each recommending their books; and thus, the French novelists, as well as the author of Jack Shepherd and kindred works, are disseminating their baleful influence to an unprecedented extent. It seems particularly bad, that travellers should be exposed to this contagion; because, having generally left their worldly cares behind them, one would suppose that their minds would be accessible to the charms of nature, as seen in our mountain views, and lake or river scenery; and that the transition from their warehouses and counting-rooms, would give double beauty to the wonders they behold. But no! the Highlands of the Hudson, the Valley of the Connecticut, or the majestic Ohio, with its wooded

banks, and fertile islands, has not sufficient attraction to call off the tourist from the story of fictitious grief, or unreal bliss.

In estimating the bad effects of novel-reading, the time consumed on them does not cover the whole extent of the evil. A taste for mental excitement is acquired, which makes more useful studies appear uninteresting, and unfits the mind for healthy action. Where this terrible hankering exists, every work of fancy however unworthy of perusal, is eagerly devoured, the craving still increasing with its gratification; till the real trials of life, the hourly sufferings of unromantic poverty, nay, even the dread concerns of eternity are disregarded. What then is to remedy the mischief? A total exclusion of works of fiction may seem the easiest plan, but is this desirable? Is the imagination to be curbed so closely, as not to be allowed the smallest indulgence? or is it possible, in this day of relaxation of parental authority, to carry out an absolute prohibition of novel-reading? I applied to Mrs. Beauchamp again, for her experience.—"In my case," my dear friend, "she replied, I have rather sought to regulate, than entirely to exclude from my young people the class of books to which you refer. In many families where the parents have forbidden novels

altogether, or burned them when found, it has led, not only to habits of deception, a thousand times worse than the first offence, but has precluded all selection in the works to be read. All clandestine actions I have sought to prevent, and therefore I have allowed, sparingly indeed, and as illustrative of history, or in connection with more desirable studies, the use occasionally of books of fiction to my daughters. Often have I read aloud to them in that essentially English author, whose wonderful knowledge of human nature, and adaptation of character, is unrivalled in our literature—Shakspeare—thus avoiding exposure to the youthful eye, of those blemishes that belonged rather to the age, than to himself, and which a skilful reader may easily omit."

In my opinion, one of the best preventives to an inordinate indulgence of this propensity, is to give an early taste for more instructive books. Travels, history and science, especially those branches which refer to earth's story, and our own formation—I mean geology and physiology—contain truths more wonderful than fiction. Above all other considerations however, a sense of responsibility as to our reading and thinking, and a thorough acquaintance with the sublime pages of inspiration, will best counteract this pernicious propensity. But methinks I

hear your young friends exclaim, "What are we to be permitted? If dress, and amusements, and novels are proscribed, what remains to the young? Better to be born with a hoary head, than to be debarred the pleasures of life in its spring time!"

Rational pleasures yet remain to you; employments fitted to your age and station; and, which is most important of all, the capability of qualifying yourselves for the high but honourable trusts, committed to our sex by their gracious Creator. Oh yes! if woman would but recognize the weight of her influence, the compass of her province, she would feel at once, that other pursuits became her than the frippery of ornament, the whirl of dissipation, or the waking dreams of romance. Her sphere is sufficiently capacious without wrangling with men, as to the equality of the sexes, or holding conventions for the discussions of her rights: she need not aspire to military command, who rules and regulates the little world of home; nor should she sigh for political aggrandizement, who has alike the legislative and executive power in the Lilliputian commonwealth, over which she presides.

In this country, it is hardly probable that women, if they desire it, may not fill a post of responsibility and usefulness. Hence the im-

portance of accustoming themselves to realize their capabilities and cultivate them to the uttermost. The time has past, when a *blue* was an object of detestation and disgust. True, we should avoid a pedantic display of the little knowledge we possess, and guard against its pursuit engrossing time which should be occupied in more homely employments. As my often quoted friend says, "If our stockings are to be of a cerulean dye, there should be a mantle of feminine modesty, long enough to cover them gracefully."

We have been speaking of duties for women, but there are pleasures too, which reason disallows not. Those who are favoured with a country life, have a long list at their disposal of simple gratifications. Flowers, those unexpensive ornaments, which nature scatters with such prodigality in our path, furnish many distinct departments of enjoyment. Their culture, their collecting in herbariums, or bouquets; the imitation of their beauty with crayon or pencil, have all their own peculiar interest. Walking, riding on horseback, and excursions for natural or mineral productions, afford delightful outdoor occupation; while for indoors, a large well regulated family circle, will always supply an ample fund of social and domestic happiness. For

those who live in cities, there are the compensating advantages of lectures, meetings, and general society, abroad; and at home, greater privileges of education, books and refinement.

Among other reading, if I have not spoken of poetry and belles-lettres, it is not because I undervalue their importance, in forming the taste, and cultivating the mind. In this prosaic railroad age, the charms of "heaven-born poesy," conduce materially to soften and elevate the feelings; while the elegance of prose authors should be as a model, to form our style, and express our meaning gracefully and correctly. Nor can I, while conceding merit due to other languages, ancient and modern, forbear to enlarge on the comprehensive strength, and copious resources, of our own Anglo-Saxon tongue. It may not compete with the stateliness of the Greek, the regular structure of the Latin, the flexibility of the French, the depth of the German, or the liquid harmony of the Italian; yet has it been made the vehicle of Milton's deathless song; and perpetuates the philosophy of a Bacon, the science of a Newton. It has uttered the accents of civil liberty, since the days of Runnemede, and furnished a Wickliffe with a medium for the pages of inspiration; while in either hemisphere, it is used in the

sacred language of prayer and praise, to Him who is the author of "that liberty, wherewith Christ has made us free." But I must close this long epistle. Herbert has, I doubt not, informed you of the termination of his studies, and his subsequent licensure by the Presbytery. My own feelings at hearing him preach his first sermon, in the church of his early youth, I leave you to imagine. It is enough to say, that my maternal aspirations were more than fulfilled; and that were one more desire accomplished, I could say with good old Simeon, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." The congregation here would be glad to have him, as our present minister has received a call to a more extended field of usefulness; but it does not often do, for a clergyman to settle in the precincts of his boyhood. Busy as he has been, Herbert has not forgotten Edwin's request, and his essay will accompany this letter. Farewell my beloved Mabel, may the counsels I have given to my young applicants, be useful to them, in calling their attention to the important topics that have been discussed, and making them more useful to the world, more devoted to their God! Yours ever,

ELLEN LINDSAY.

LETTER XVII.

MABEL HARCOURT TO MRS. LINDSAY.

Magnolia Grove.

My Dear Aunt:—Your kind letters are both received, and have been read with much interest in our little circle; such have been their effects, that Maria Morton has made a bonfire of her novels, and Julia declares she will never attend a dancing party again. To make amends for these sacrifices, we have commenced a Reading Society, at the suggestion of Miss Green, whom we elected president. Our first book, was Foster's Essay on Decision of Character, in which we are all much interested; and as we read aloud in turn, and allow ourselves to be criticised, it is to be hoped that we shall all improve, in more ways than one. But this is not all. Edwin's letter from you, was forwarded to us; and we have commenced our systematic contribution plan. Miss Green, who acts as treasurer, keeps the offerings in an old fashioned china sugar-bowl—a memento of other days—so the children call it "the sacred sugar bowl;" and often give us the savings of their allowance, as their share in the business. We have commenced too, a regular Sabbath-school

for the coloured children on the plantation, which commences at an early hour, that we may have time for our long ride to church. You know I used to be a great sluggard in the morning, but I now feel the benefit of early rising, and wonder at my former laziness. My sweet Edith co-operates with me in every good work, and from her natural amiability and evenness of temper, gets on better than I do. You know how often my hasty way got me into trouble at school, and it still is my besetting infirmity. As you may suppose, the house seems very quiet without Edwin, and we miss him every hour of the day. He writes in great spirits from College, and tells us that he is very hard at work. I am delighted that Herbert's numerous trials and examinations are all over, and that he has attained his long cherished object. I hope he will settle in your village, as I am sure his boyish days will bear the investigation of the closest scrutiny; and it will be so delightful to you, to remain in your own dear home. When my father left us for the summer, he said to me, "Mabel, as your mother is too much of an invalid for the office, I appoint Miss Green and you my chaplains till I return." I wanted the dear governess to take charge of this duty altogether, but she insists on my sharing it with her;

so we have worship alternately. Indeed, I know no one who seems so much changed for the better, as Miss Green. Religion has indeed done great things for her; giving purpose to her feelings, spirit to devotional performances, and new life to her whole character. She and I are on a pleasant footing of intimacy, very different to the enforced tasks of former days; and though Edith and I are emancipated from regular lessons, we have commenced a course of instructive reading, in the boudoir before mentioned, where, after the school hours are over, Miss Green, and sometimes my mother, join our little party. But I am rattling on in a very egotistic way. Farewell, my beloved aunt, forget not to pray for your affectionate niece,

MABEL HARCOURT.

LETTER XVIII.

HERBERT LINDSAY TO EDWIN HARCOURT.

Violet Vale.

My Dear Cousin:—The many pressing engagements connected with my entrance into the ministry have hitherto prevented me from complying with your request; but as that important epoch in my history is now past, I have taken

the earliest opportunity to give you my views on the subject of revivals of religion. May the Sanctifier enable me to speak on this interesting truth, with reverence and with power! The word revive often occurs in Scripture. Isaiah tells us, "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones:" and Habakkuk prays, "O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known." In the last quoted text, the marginal reading is "preserve alive;" and this gives a good explanation of the metaphor employed. As the herbage of spring requires the showers of heaven to vivify and refresh it, so does the soul thirst after those communications of God's grace, which he has promised when he said, "I will be as the dew unto Israel."

These spiritual effusions it is the peculiar office-work of the Comforter to bestow. So believers are said to "be filled with the Spirit," to "walk in the Spirit," to "abide in the Spirit," and are exhorted, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." This last passage seems to require some

enlarging on. As the love of Christ was enhanced by being manifested to his enemies, so the compassion of the Spirit is heightened by the consideration, that he comforts those who are so apt to grieve him. And this may therefore be fixed as an important principle in this part of the mystery of God, that the principle foundation of this assuming the character of a Comforter by the Holy Spirit, is his own peculiar and ineffable love. The efficacy of our consolation and the life of our obedience both depend on this; for the knowledge that every acting of this Divine Agent towards us, and every gracious impression on our minds, are all the result of his infinite love, must influence our hearts with spiritual delight: while this knowledge must communicate a motive for cheerful, watchful, universal obedience, as all the actings of sin or unbelief are contrary to those of the Holy Ghost, quenching his movements, resisting his persuasions, and grieving his tenderness. "Whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." By this, no especial act of the Spirit is intended, but only an especial effect of his influences on us. Sealing may be considered as a natural or moral action, that is, either with respect to the act or to the use. In the first sense, it is the communication of the impres-

sion of the seal on the substance. So the Spirit's sealing should consist in the enstamping on the soul his own holy nature and likeness. The second sense—namely, the use, is two-fold; to give security to the performance of deeds, grants, &c., and to ensure the safe-keeping of property, on which a seal is set. So things precious and valuable are sealed, that they may be kept inviolate; and thus is shadowed forth the power which the Holy Ghost exerts for the preservation of believers unto the day of redemption. In the second Epistle to the Corinthians, third chapter and seventh verse, the Apostle institutes a comparison between "the ministration of death," as he calls the Mosaic economy, and "the ministration of the Spirit," in which he shows not only the superior glory of the latter, but its enduring character. "For if that which was done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious." This is one peculiarity of the manifestation of the Paraclete, as promised by our Lord; "that he may abide with you for ever." Another characteristic of the same dispensation is, that the influences of the Spirit are given in answer to prayer. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter," Jesus tells his disciples. This is exemplified in the

descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, which was the first revival that we have knowledge of. We are told that the disciples "continued with one accord in prayer and supplication."

They were not told the particular time that "the promise of the Father, which they had heard of" from Christ, was to be fulfilled; and we can well imagine that carnal wisdom would find a thousand objections to their remaining together, while unbelieving fear would suggest the prudence of averting persecution by a timely flight. But nothing of this kind seems even to have been proposed, and richly was their faith rewarded, when with other tongues, and bolder utterance, they were enabled to speak the wonderful works of God, till three thousand converts were added to their number. This leads me to remark a third characteristic of this ministration of the Spirit, which is, that where Christians are revived in their graces, sinners are, at the same time, often convicted of sin. This part of the office-work of the Holy Ghost is spoken of by the Lord Jesus, (John xvi. 8,) and is called an awakening, because men are aroused from the lethargy of sin, and made conscious of the danger of their condition both by nature and practice: when this awakening is carried on to con-

version, the work is termed an ingathering, because the harvest of souls is at these times abundant. These periods are also called "times of refreshing," as Peter phrases it in his second revival sermon. I know that some commentators refer this expression to the destruction of Jerusalem, and others to the day of judgment; but the term as collated from other passages is so consonant to revivals of religion, that I cannot but think it may be applied to them, especially if the passage be rendered thus: "that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,"—a mode of expression contended for, on strong grounds by some authors. Be this as it may, we cannot doubt but that this very sermon was pre-eminently owned of the Spirit; as in the next chapter it is mentioned "that many of them which heard the word believed, and the number of the men was about five thousand," making an increase of nearly half since the day of Pentecost. In this instance we hear nothing of those supernatural appearances or miraculous gifts, which then were so abundant, and we see therefore that the extraordinary operations of the Spirit are not necessary to, or commensurate with, his saving efficacy, in calling sinners from darkness unto light. We have no reason for supposing that

Judas did fewer miracles than the other Apostles, when their Master "gave them power and authority over all devils and to cure diseases;" and Paul tells us that to speak with "the tongues of men and of angels, to have the gift of prophecy, to understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, yea, to have faith that can remove mountains," will not avail for our salvation without that love which has pre-eminence in the list of the "fruits of the Spirit." Shortly after, multitudes in Samaria experienced the transforming power of the gospel, and upon the dispersion of the disciples, after the martyrdom of Stephen, they were instrumental in exciting a general attention to religion in the remote parts of Judea, and even as far as the territories of Greece. While Paul's preaching—himself a signal instance of the discriminating grace of the Sanctifier—reached from Antioch to Rome, numbering its trophies among the barbarians of Melita, and the saints "in Cæsar's household." Nor should it be forgotten, that professing Christ was not in these early times the pleasant, respectable, often profitable thing it now is; then they were "made as the filth of the earth, and the offscouring of all things," "everywhere spoken against," and as regards this life, were "of all men most miserable." How strong

then must have been the impression of things divine, to counterbalance things seen and present! These glorious manifestations of the power of the Spirit's ministration have not been confined to the Apostolic age. Passing from the records of inspiration, we find that revivals have always existed with a greater or less degree of power, especially in the later periods of the Christian church. This was emphatically true during the period of the Reformation, in the sixteenth century; when the word of God, so long bound in the chains of superstition, and buried amid the rubbish of tradition, and the mummeries of monkery, was released, and resuscitated, and once more brought to the light of day. Under its blessed influence, Germany, France, Switzerland, Holland, Denmark, the Low Countries, and Britain, were severally visited by copious showers of mercy. During the season of the plague in London, in 1665, there was a very general awakening, in which many thousands are said to have been hopefully born of the Spirit. In the early part of the seventeenth century, various parts of Scotland, and the north of Ireland, were blessed at different periods with signal effusions of Divine grace, in which great multitudes gave evidence of having been the subjects of regeneration.

But in no part of the Church have these precious seasons been more abundant, than in our own highly favoured country, where religion is disencumbered of all civil disabilities, and freed from the shackles of a dominant church establishment. During the first half of the last century, under the ministrations of Whitefield, Brainard, Edwards, Davies, the Tennents, and many other holy men, God was pleased to stamp success upon their efforts as unexampled as unlooked for. And about the commencement of the present century, a great work was carried on in the western churches, which, though mixed with some alloy, was yet proved to be genuine, by the enduring steadfastness, and untiring zeal, of many who were then converted to the faith.

And though of later years these seasons have not been as frequent, or as general as could be wished, there have still enough been vouchsafed to show that "the residue of the Spirit" still abides with the Church. As the existence of the counterfeit proves that of the genuine coin, so false views of revivals only serve to show the worth of that which they are designed to imitate. Under the title of New Measures, a variety of expedients have been made use of, to induce, or rather stand instead of, the vital energies

of the Comforter. Among these, the anxious bench, and other similar contrivances, have been resorted to; in some cases with apparent success for a time, though when the ferment had subsided, the people were usually more than ever indifferent, and hardened. Happily, the churches are at length convinced, that mere human machinery can never regenerate the soul; and that neither the lash of excitement nor the power of sympathy can constitute a revival. The more we prize these "times of refreshing," the more careful we should be not to mar them by an admixture of human inventions. Another error, that has been too prevalent, is that the distinctive doctrines of the church are not suitable for a revival. Election might frighten the young convert—Predestination would discourage effort, and so forth. Just hear what Peter said in his great revival sermon—"Him being delivered, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,"—and the truth in its simplicity, has been then, and ever since, "mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds." I mentioned that there was some alloy in the revivals which occurred in the year 1800, and about that time; especially in the Synod of Kentucky. The excitement began in Logan county, and soon spread

all over the State and adjoining region. Besides increased attention to the usual times and ordinary means of grace, large camp-meetings were held, and a number of days and nights in succession spent in almost unceasing religious exercises. At these meetings, hundreds, and in some cases thousands of people, might have been seen and heard, at one and the same time, engaged in singing and prayer, in exhortation and preaching, in leaping, shouting, disputing, and conversing with a confusion akin to Babel itself. This wonderful state of things was attended with the worst results; a love of excitement and agitation was called forth, and a number of ignorant, hot-headed young men began to assume the office of public exhorters. These were soon licensed by the Presbytery, in the hope that their usefulness would make up for their irregularity; but as might have been expected, these new recruits or "novices" showed great laxity in their theological opinions. A new Presbytery was set off, consisting mostly of those who held the new views; and they became a sort of mint, for issuing, in great abundance, similar coin. The consequence was, that Arminians and Pelagians actually entered the Presbyterian Church; and multiplied rapidly, till the decisive measures of the Synod of

Kentucky, and the General Assembly, arrested the progress of the evil. The disorderly intruders were banished; a majority of the sounder part of them formed the body now known by the name of Cumberland Presbyterians; and the remainder became either Chrystians or Shakers. Another peculiar feature of these times, was the variety of bodily exercise then prevalent. The jerks, as they were called, were violent spasmodic contractions of the muscles, which sometimes turned the head quickly from right to left, and back again; and sometimes threw the person on the ground, where he floundered like a fish. These singular affections were common to young and old, saint and sinner, black and white, but lukewarm professors, and persecutors, were more especially subject to them. It is difficult to account for these visitations, which have been attributed sometimes to sympathy, sometimes to Divine power, and sometimes to Satanic agency. Whatever was their cause, they have now disappeared, while the permanent good effected at the time they occurred still remains.

We turn with pleasure to glance over some of the seasons of God's presence with his people. Out of many others now before me, I select the following accounts of revivals. In the congre-

gation of Dr. Spring, in 1823, there were nearly a hundred instances of conversion. In 1820 at Wethersfield, several females of the church privately instituted a weekly concert in the closet, to implore an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In the following year, the series of revivals seem to have commenced; sixty-eight persons were added to the church, and a considerable number of others also were believed to be the subjects of Divine grace. In Pittsfield, Massachusetts, for a considerable time, the church and people were favoured with the effusions of the Holy Spirit. The third Sabbath of September will not soon be forgotten by the present generation in Pittsfield, for that Sabbath was a high day. To behold more than eighty persons, and one half of them heads of families, rising up to enter into covenant with God and with his people—to look round and see who they were—to hear their song—to witness their emotions, and to welcome them for the first time to the table of the Lord—O! it was a scene which I shall not attempt to describe! A solemn awe and stillness pervaded the great congregation, and some sinners were that day awakened by what they heard and saw in the sanctuary. We doubt not that there was joy in heaven that day.

However delightful these effusions of the Spirit may be, there is a state of things enjoyed by some churches, indicating a higher degree of religious progress. I mean that unintermitted prosperity prevailing in some few favoured oases in this wilderness, where "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation," and where Christ may indeed be said to "have the dew of his youth." One such church is especially present to my mind, where the pastor has used his pen in defending the great doctrines of Zion, rather than in publishing the increase of his flock; and where, unknown to publicity, save in the particular I have mentioned, he labours faithfully and successfully, and has beheld a rich return of his toil in the spiritual husbandry, by the prosperity of his church, and the peace of God in his own soul.

Would that there were more such choice spirits in our Church! And would, that as Baxter asserted the tone of family piety and instruction were so kept up by private Christians, that the church in the house should be the usual and accustomed birth-place for the souls of those who are its inmates! In conclusion, I would point out some truths, as the obvious deductions from what has been said.

First. How incumbent on us to mind "the

things of the Spirit." If this dispensation be so pre-eminently that of the Sanctifier, let us who profess ourselves his people, see to it that we are "spiritually minded, which is life and peace."

Secondly. If we desire the Spirit's influences for ourselves or others, we must pray for them.

Thirdly. The ordinary workings of the Spirit flow from the reading, and still more the preaching of the word of God, though he is not limited exclusively to these appointed means.

Fourthly. The best test of the genuineness of the work of conversion is the enduring steadfastness of its subjects.

Fifthly. Let not the mistakes of good men, the arts of Satan, or the imperfection of all things human, lead us to disparage or decry revivals of religion.

Sixthly. We see the inefficacy, not to say sinfulness, of that wild-fire excitement, which by multiplying ordinances, and encouraging disorder, brings into discredit those manifestations of which it is the counterfeit.

Seventhly. Let those who are brought in at a time when converts are numerous as the drops of dew, not glory over others who by ones, or twos, or threes, in a time of coldness and desertion, have been induced to own their

Saviour. But I must close this long letter by imploring for us all that "communion of the Holy Ghost," and "fellowship of the Spirit," which shall best fit us for usefulness here, and for a participation of that glory to which his own children are sealed unto the day of redemption. Your affectionate cousin,

HERBERT LINDSAY.

LETTER XIX.

MABEL HARCOURT TO MRS. LINDSAY.

Magnolia Grove.

My Dear Aunt:—Your kind letter was received, and through the medium of Edwin, Herbert's essay on revivals.

I hope your instructions have been of use to us all, and even to some who are beyond the pale of relationship. Among the rest, Maria Morton has been much affected by what has been said, and I cannot but hope that she will unite with the church at our next communion. She has, however, she says, some difficulty in her mind arising from that solemn warning of the Apostle, "Whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."

She hopes therefore that you will give her some information about the sacraments, (as she has not been baptized in infancy) and we shall all be glad to hear a little more about them; as except what was said about infant membership in those first conversations of ours, you have never touched on these subjects.

We are all going on comfortably at home, looking for my father's return from the circuit with great pleasure, as home never seems quite like home without him. I am delighted to find that Herbert has accepted the call to his own beloved church, and that pastor and people seem so well pleased with the arrangement. I feel as he urges me, the additional reason this furnishes for mentioning our engagement to my father, but even as you foretold me, I am no more willing to have it confessed now, than at its first occurrence. Yet I do not think he will refuse his consent to it, for he does not seem anxious we should marry any of the surrounding planters, who I believe would some of them like our portions, if not ourselves. The news from Edwin continues to be of the most cheering character; the Faculty of the College speak of him in the highest terms; and as a tract distributer and Sabbath-school teacher, he is, we hear, untiring in his labours. Henry Harrison

too, is fulfilling the prognostics of his young patron; and is making rapid progress in his preparatory studies. Our reading society goes on swimmingly; we are now reading Abercrombie on the Intellectual Powers, and flatter ourselves that *ours* are of a calibre large enough to comprehend him. Julia Morton had to confess the other evening, that our present pursuits were more rational than those which used to occupy her attention; and that after all, so much visiting and gaiety were sad preparatives for death or eternity. What do I not owe you, my beloved aunt, for the pains bestowed on the unformed heathenish girl, who sought your kindly shelter! If my hopes are not disappointed, it will be in my power to soothe your declining years, with those services your goodness has so richly merited. But I know you do not like protestations, and they alone will not content me either. Come what may, I will no longer hide from my indulgent father, what he ought to know.

Pray for your poor child, that she may be directed and sustained in the path of duty; and believe her in heart, though she may never be so in name, your own daughter.

MABEL HARCOURT.

LETTER XX.

MRS. LINDSAY TO MABEL HARCOURT.

Violet Vale.

My Dear Mabel:—It is very gratifying to me to think that I have been of use to any of you, and I gladly accede to your wishes, and those of your young friend, in writing something relative to the sacraments of our Church.

In the present day there is a tendency to exalt these ordinances to a pre-eminence not designed by their author. The feelings of David when he said, "thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name"—that is, all that whereby God maketh himself known—should show us that however important the sacraments may be, they should not exclude, or interfere with that "law of the Lord," which "is perfect, converting the soul." A sacrament is defined to be the visible form of an invisible grace. This term is not found in Scripture, but borrowed from the Latin language, where it had different meanings: 1st, a sum of money, laid down by both parties in a lawsuit, which by the loser was forfeited, and devoted to sacred uses; 2d, an oath, by which the soldiers bound themselves to be faith-

ful to their commander, and obey him in all things; and 3d, as used in the writings of the early Christians, a mystery. This is the translation of a Greek word, used not only to denote the doctrines of the Trinity, and the incarnation, but also baptism, and the Lord's Supper, especially the latter; partly because spiritual blessings were conveyed under external symbols, and partly from the secret manner in which it was celebrated. Both of these latter meanings are easy of application to the rites we are considering.

Circumcision and the passover, were the Jewish sacraments; and in the Christian church, baptism and the Lord's Supper take their place. Here I would remark, that the idea of a sacrament includes first, a divine institution; without this, the elements selected would afford as little support to our faith, as the water in which we wash, or the food we daily eat. Hence we condemn the conduct of the church of Rome, which has increased the number to seven, while Scripture gives us but two. But another characteristic of a sacrament, is its significance. Water, purifying and clear, gushing from the earth, or descending from the clouds, is an apt similitude of the influences of the Spirit, to cleanse and refresh the soul. While in the

supper, nothing could be a more proper emblem of the efficacy of our Saviour's atonement, than bread, the staff of life, and wine "that maketh glad the heart of man."

A third observation on this subject is—that the signs or seals which God has annexed to his covenants, are assurances that the blessings promised in them are real and abiding. True it is, that these signs will not of themselves necessarily ensure salvation; but to those who have a right to them, they are a security for the enjoyment of the privileges they exhibit.

A fourth remark is, that the sacraments are important as memorials of past events. The passover was an unceasing proof of the authenticity of Moses' account of the children of Israel's departure from Egypt; for how could an impostor have persuaded a whole people to commemorate an event that had never occurred? So the Lord's Supper is a standing evidence of the integrity of the Saviour. Had he been a deceiver, and condemned to death for deluding the people, he would scarcely have instituted a rite, to perpetuate the memory of his infamy. Since, therefore, he shrunk not from the transmission of the knowledge of these sufferings to the end of time, it is a strong presumption that he was conscious of his innocence, and that his

disciples also viewed him in this light, or else they would not have been willing to "show forth his death till he come."

A fifth idea is, that the efficacy of sacraments depends entirely upon the Divine blessing, upon them that by faith do receive them. The idea that either ordinance works like a charm, necessarily, and without the sanction of the institutor, is a fatal delusion. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

As the Abrahamic covenant and its consequences, (among which was infant baptism), has been discussed in our conversations on church order, I shall not say much respecting it now. The baptism of adults is clearly laid down in Scripture, being based on the profession of their faith, as in the case of the Ethiopian baptized by Philip. The element used is water, and the form as already often quoted in this correspondence, "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." The mode of administration, was, if you remember, also discussed before; so I shall not repeat the arguments then employed. This ordinance is administered in the name of the adorable Trinity, because the three Persons in it all concurred in that salvation of which bap-

tism is the sign; and because we are dedicated to the service and worship of the Divine subsistences. It is a confessing of Christ before men; taking his yoke, assuming his name; and rich and various are the blessings, which it signifies and seals.

First. Regeneration. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Here note, that water cannot avail without the Spirit produce that moral change, of which the external emblem is only the representation.

Second. Forgiveness of sins. "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins." We must not suppose that remission is inseparably connected with baptism, but we are plainly taught that it is a symbol of the purification of the soul from guilt, by the atoning blood of Christ.

Third. Admission to the family of God, for it represents our fellowship with Christ, and is the badge of our heavenly citizenship. How should we desire to recommend the household of faith by our walk and spirit! and how careful we should be to show that we are the Lord's, not only in name, but in sincerity and truth!

Fourth. Baptism signifies a resurrection to eternal life. Some have supposed that there is

a symbolic representation of this event, in the rising of the baptized person from the water. The mode of burial then prevalent was not to plunge into the earth, but to lay in caves or vaults; and besides, it is not conceded that baptism meant immersion. We must also remember, that the resurrection was one of the cardinal doctrines made known by Christ and his Apostles, (Acts xvii. 18), and was sometimes used as the great test of the truth of the gospel. Thus the Apostle, "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." In this view, baptism assures us of a triumph over death and the grave, through the blood of Christ with which we are sprinkled; and of admission into heaven, for which we are qualified by the washing of regeneration.

Let us now inquire what are the obligations of baptism, or the duties it involves on those who have received it. Circumcision bound the Israelites to keep the whole law: "for circumcision" saith Paul, "verily profiteth if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision." Baptism is of the same import, and ratifies our subjection to the authority of Christ. It therefore

implies, first, an engagement to believe all the truths that are revealed in the Scriptures. It takes in a profession of our faith in the Trinity, and all the doctrines consequent on this all important truth; and owning Christ as our teacher, we in it, place ourselves under his care, to receive his instructions and learn of him.

Secondly. Baptism implies an engagement to observe the ordinances of Christ. Entering this new society, we are bound to conform to its laws, and respect its usages. Let us then neglect none of the means of grace, which it is in our power to attend; "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is," but resorting to the humble prayer-meeting, where they that fear the Lord speak often one to another, with as much punctuality as to the crowded assembly,

> "In all the pomp of method and of art,
> When men display to congregations wide
> Devotion's every grace, except the heart!"

Thirdly. Baptism recognizes our obligations to obey the commandments of Christ. The Apostle, after reminding the Roman converts of their baptismal engagements, goes on to say, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin

therefore reign in your mortal body, but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead."

Before I leave this subject, I must say a word or two to those of my young correspondents, who have been baptized in infancy. Think not my young friends, that this initiatory rite has lost its binding obligations, because you were made an unconscious recipient of it. It is a duty and a privilege for parents to "suffer" their little ones to come to Christ in this ordinance, it is just as stringent in its nature, as if you voluntarily came under its requisitions. Lay not the flattering unction to thy soul, that because you were not cognizant of the transaction, it is a dead letter, and without validity.

If Christian parents do their duty, a heavy responsibility rests on those, who with the baptismal water on their head, yet live and die as "enemies to God by wicked works;" by unbelief, and disregard to his worship and commands.

We come now to the other Christian sacrament—the Lord's Supper. This ordinance differs from baptism, as it is often repeated, while the initiatory rite is performed but once. It is sometimes called the eucharist, because in its institution Christ gave thanks to God. The

elements used, are bread and wine, to represent the Saviour's broken body and shed blood. The Romish Church, as you are well aware, denies the cup to the laity altogether; but as they have not a shadow of scriptural grounds for this custom, there is no need to defend the contrary practice. Another mistake of this deluded people, is that of transubstantiation, or the conversion of the substance of the symbols of the supper, into the real body and blood of the Saviour. This opinion was first openly and explicitly maintained in the ninth century, and received its final sanction at the Council of Trent. To account for the fact, that no such change is visible after the words of consecration, they teach that the substance is annihilated, and only the *species* remain; and that the bread and wine retain the appearance, colour, taste, smell and shape, while that which supported them is taken away. How different from this figment, of such numerous and invisible creations of the Saviour by each officiating priest, is Paul's declaration—"Christ was *once* offered, to bear the sins of many;" and again, "but this man after he had offered *one sacrifice for sins*, for ever sat down on the right hand of God." In defence of this dogma, the Romanists plead the words of institution, "this is my body;" but a

moment's reflection will convince us, that the body of the Saviour was then before his disciples living, speaking, and presenting the elements which were to show forth his death. He had called himself a vine, a door, a way, and here the language must be explained figuratively; besides, both in the Hebrew and the Syriac—a dialect of which was spoken by our Lord—there is no verb to denote, to signify, or to represent; and its place is supplied by the verb of existence. The idea of transubstantiation too, is entirely foreign to the language of the sacred writers. Paul calls the symbol of our Lord's body, bread, not only before, but after consecration, which no Papist would be allowed to do. But error is seldom single-handed, and this tenet once admitted, makes room for a whole host of soul-destroying delusions.

1st. The idolatrous worship of the wafer, which after the words of consecration, is elevated and adored, by both priest and people.

2d. The notion that the Eucharist is a true and proper sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead; thus converting the free and gracious gift of the Saviour, into a means of extorting sums untold from the superstitious

people, to redeem their relatives from fabled fires of purgatory.

3d. The false ideas of power, with which the priest is invested, on the supposition, that a few words from his lips should effect a miracle so unexampled in the annals of the universe.

From this monstrous invention of misguided men, we turn gladly to our own commemorative feast. This is intended first to show forth the death of Christ; that great event by which life ensued to those who have exercised faith in his name. The bread is broken to denote his violent painful death, the wine poured out to represent his blood, flowing to wash away the sins of men. How forcibly do these emblems represent the realities of Calvary! The evil of sin, the justice of an inflexible and holy sovereign, the love of Christ, the tender care which even in that hour and power of darkness instituted this blessed memento of his sufferings, all these are strongly brought to mind at the table of the Lord.

Secondly. This ordinance is intended to unite Christians in love to each other. Children of a common Lord, subjects to a common King, this rite is well adapted to strengthen the bond of faith, and draw still closer the links of the chain of love.

Thirdly. By thus eating bread and drinking

wine, we assume the badge of visible profession, virtually confess Christ, and avouch ourselves his people.

Fourthly. This sacrament was intended to edify Christians, and promote their spiritual life. The experience of believers will amply corroborate the sweetness of communing at the Saviour's board. Here our wavering faith is strengthened, our love increased, our repentance deepened, and our vows renewed. Here the Master sits at the head of his own table, and supplies the wants his poor disciples feel, communicating grace, and mercy, and peace. But our feast of love works not like an incantation or a charm—there must be an adaptation in the recipient before he can eat "angels' food." It is the *children's* bread, and they only can benefit by it. Thus there are qualifications for this ordinance. First, An outward credible profession of religion. Second, A state of peace and amity with the brethren. Third, Faith in lively exercise, taking Christ as our Saviour, God the Father as our covenant God, the Spirit as our Sanctifier. Fourthly, An earnest self examination as to our standing before God; the state of our graces, and the prevailing temper of our minds. Fifthly, A desire to follow the Lord more closely, and live more devotedly than before.

If we come with these feelings, we shall hardly be sent empty away; but shall be enabled to account this ordinance "a feast of fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined."

Even the timid and the doubting often have their burthens loosed, and their hard questions solved, at this holy table. To such, the text you refer to in your last letter (1 Cor. xi. 27,) has often proved a difficulty; but if your friend reads the whole context, she will find disorders spoken of which cannot be committed in the present day. Eating and drinking unworthily does not mean to receive the sacrament with a weak faith, a trembling hand, and fearful heart; nor does it denote communing without perfect holiness, and entire freedom from sin; nor even partaking with backwardness to the duty, deadness and coldness in it—when lamented over and repented of. This great offence is rather to be found, when men receive the ordinance out of custom, not out of conscience; or because the law of man requires it, and not out of reverence to the command of God. It is more likely to consist in receiving without that disposition of mind, and preparation of heart, or that reverence and devotion which the occasion demands: receiving without knowledge, faith, and repentance, with-

out resolutions for a sincere obedience, or reconciliation with our neighbour. Still more it is likely to be attributed to those who commune from the sordid motives of temporal gain, exemption from penal edicts, or with unrepented and aggravated guilt on the conscience. Such an one may be said to "be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord;" as he not only trifles with the benefits these emblems foreshadow, but adds insult to injury, and affronts the Master at his own table, even while offering to the guests his richest dainties.

Be assured, however, my dear Mabel, this awful passage was not intended to deter the weeping, doubting disciple, but to intimidate the daring hypocrite; and tell your friend that there is often more sin in withstanding the invitations of the gospel than in venturing forward on the Lord's bidding, undeserving as we feel ourselves to be. The 29th verse is another terror to weak Christians, but the word translated "damnation" should be rendered "judgment," and from the context, be understood to refer to temporal, not eternal punishment.

Having endeavoured to give you some account of our Christian passover, and hoping that what I have said may suit the case of poor Maria, I will conclude my long letter.

As to the other subject you speak of, my opinion is well known to you. Concealment in these matters is always wrong, and if Herbert is to be deprived of you, the sooner he knows it the better. But I will not give up hope as yet. With love to all the dear household, I am your affectionate aunt,

ELLEN LINDSAY.

LETTER XXI.

MABEL HARCOURT TO MRS. LINDSAY.

Magnolia Grove.

My Dear Aunt:—I am sure you will rejoice to hear that my secret has been disclosed, and the tidings favourably received by my father; but I must begin at the beginning. Acting on the resolution I mentioned in my last, which Edith highly approved, I took the first opportunity to have a confidential talk with him. Producing the ring he had given me, I said, "Dear father, do you remember what you said when you gave me this?" "Perfectly," he replied, "and pray what is your request? I suppose you want to go eastward again, and your boon is the money needed for your journey." "No indeed! father," I replied, it is a

much greater favour I desire—even your forgiveness." "Forgiveness!—and for what?" he returned. "Why, for not telling you my secret sooner,"—sobbed your poor child, thoroughly frightened, and wishing herself out of the scrape.

"Come, don't cry," said my father, "I am not a tyrant Mabel, but a fond parent. Tell me what you have done." "Why dear father, the truth is, that Herbert and I are engaged, on condition that you approve of it; but don't blame him, for he wanted to tell you at first, and I wish I had let him do so."

"But how came your aunt to consent to this, Mabel? I know that she does not like the marriage of cousins." This reply gave me great hopes, and I answered, "She neither liked the cousinship, nor the concealment, father; but you know we are not full cousins, as you were the child of the first wife of grandfather, and aunt that of the second one; as to the concealment, as I said before, that is all my fault, and I depend on my talisman." "Then you shall not be disappointed, you little witch," said my father, kissing me, "but as for this nonsuch cousin of yours, I must see that he is worthy of you before I can consent to let him have you.

So tell your aunt to come on here with him, and if I like him, there shall be no barrier to your happiness. Now let us go and tell your mother." As I expected, my mother felt very unwilling to think of parting with me; but I told her about Edith and the younger ones, and did my best to reconcile her to the match; for I am very sure my father will like Herbert, and from his questions about the church, and your sweet little home, and so-forth, am convinced, he will not be inexorable to our wishes for an early union. I gave him all Herbert's letters to read, and he was much pleased with them, saying they did him honour. I had almost forgotten to acknowledge the receipt of your kind letter on the sacraments, which was the more appropriate, as Mrs. Morton having been educated at Georgetown, had a strong leaning to the Roman Catholics. Dear aunt! do come soon, I shall be so glad to see you once more. Tell Herbert he shall no longer accuse me of cowardice, and want of candour; nor say that I must be ashamed of a lover whom I will not acknowledge.

Farewell, dear aunt! says your happy

MABEL HARCOURT.

LETTER XXII.

MRS. LINDSAY TO MABEL HARCOURT.

Violet Vale.

My Dearest Mabel:—How can I describe the pleasure which your letter and the accompanying one from your father, have given me! I find that your secret was known, or at least strongly suspected by my brother, who in consequence made very particular inquiry from one of Herbert's professors, (who was his old friend and classmate) as to the standing, talents, and disposition of his nephew; and being satisfied that your affections had not been bestowed on an unworthy object, he quietly waited for your disclosure. To Herbert, the news has come so unexpectedly, that he can hardly contain his transport. You know how much he feared that ambition, or the love of money, might operate on your father's mind, and raise obstacles to your union. For myself, the great purpose of my life is accomplished—my son has repaid me for all the sorrows of my early life, and the thought of having you to supply my place to him, when I am gone, has relieved the last anxiety of my heart. The preparations for our journey south are expedited by Herbert in every possible way,

and we shall soon be with you. This, of itself, would terminate our correspondence, which has been very interesting; but before I lay aside my pen—as Prospero did his wand—let me give you a few cautions relative to the new relation you will so soon be called on to sustain. Do not think I desire to dash the cup of youth's joyful anticipations with the bitter experience of maturer years. No, be happy in each other, but do not expect that your present sunshine will always last; clouds and cares will darken your horizon, and showers of grief deluge the landscape; but if the bow, the sign of covenant love be there, even the surrounding gloom will place its tints in brighter relief. Do not expect to find perfection in Herbert, he is human, and has his faults, though I trust the divine principle implanted within will not let them have the mastery. A feeling of mutual forbearance is indispensable to happiness in married life, and the command of temper most desirable. Happily, there is a bond uniting your hearts, which will draw you to each other, in spite of all repelling influences—a common faith, a mutual dependence for life and for death. Think not my strain of moralizing or *Mentorizing* too sad. Life was once to me as full of joyous expectations as it is to you; but though

earthly hopes have been blasted, and human helpers laid low, yet can I triumph in that "friend that sticketh closer than a brother;" and rejoice in that inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, even though the path to it has been a thorny one. Here, dear child, is our resting-place—that our Rock is not as their rock, our enemies themselves being judges.

As the wife of a clergyman, you will doubtless be exposed to much animadversion. Some people seem to think that the better half of their minister should combine all good qualities; have the strength of a female Sampson, the wisdom of the woman of Tekoa, the nimble fingers of Dorcas, the faith of Mary, and the household thrift of Martha. They would have her be so good a manager as to live upon nothing; she must exercise hospitality, though unable to afford domestic help; and in feeble health, she must shine in societies, prayer-meetings, and general company; her dress must be genteel enough for the most refined, and plain enough for the most censorious; and in discretion, tact, and sociability of manner, she must excel. Be not frightened at this array of qualification, for the half is not told you. Prepare to sympathize with your husband in the difficulties of his path,

the unconcern of worldings, the opposition of gainsayers, the misinterpretation of his motives, the disappointments of his efforts—perhaps the shattering of his health; and see him put forth exertions which in any other calling would ensure wealth, and receive for them the comparatively meagre dole of a clergyman's stipend.

But turn not away from the picture in despair, there is a brighter aspect of things. The woman who discharges aright the duties of a minister's wife, and "does what she could" to sustain her partner in his labours, relieve his anxieties, cheer him with her smiles, and as much as possible divest him of family cares, is no slothful or unprofitable servant. And even if she be precluded by domestic labours or ill health, from attending to the more prominent and public duties of her sphere—at least she can diffuse the charm of her presence over the atmosphere of home, and minister to the comfort of her worn and wearied husband. She has her blessings too. If it be permitted to indulge in feelings of exultation, I know no occasion more likely to call them forth in the mind of a minister's wife, than when she hears the words of the everlasting gospel from those beloved lips, and finds them blessed to the salvation of immortal souls. The affection, too, of the congregation

must be hers, unless there is a sad failure somewhere:—the society of good and enlightened persons is a benefit of no mean description; the respect of even the ungodly; freedom from the dread of those excesses in conduct which so often convert the husband into an object of fear or disgust; and most of all, the approbation and smile of a covenant God. How much of a clergyman's usefulness must depend on the co-operation and like-mindedness of his wife! How essentially may she mar or promote his peace of mind, temporal comfort, and growth in the divine life! Eternity will unfold results, arising from the humble, unostentatious self-denial of woman under these circumstances, which will cast in the shade the triumphs of the warrior, the discoveries of the philosopher, and the researches of the metaphysician. Let then the burdened heart rejoice, the bowed-down head be lifted up! He who accepted the widow's mite, overlooks not your labours, and appreciates your sacrifices of inclination, ease, and abundance. And when the duties of the church are rightly understood, and the services of her ministers properly estimated, their families will not, as now, be straitened for that support they ought to receive from their grateful people; nor while ground to the earth by pecuniary difficulties, will

they be expected to maintain their footing of equality with the opulent congregation. But I must draw my homily to a close, which may best be done by invoking a blessing on the instructions I have given you; that you may be well informed in the order and polity of our Church, deeply grounded in its doctrines, and richly imbued with a spiritual, experimental knowledge of vital holiness! Thus you will be enabled to show *Why you are a Presbyterian*, and bear testimony to the excellence of a system, which, while it rises to the highest mounts of the Divine mysteries, extends its holy influence to the most minute obligation; and while it possseses truths so gigantic as to fill the most expanded intellect, yet commends itself in its beauty and simplicity to babes and sucklings.

Your ever affectionate mother,

ELLEN LINDSAY.

AUTHOR'S POSTSCRIPT.

It may be well to gratify the curiosity of the young readers, so far as to inform them, that Herbert having proved acceptable to Mabel's father, their union, after a suitable interval, took

place at her father's hospitable mansion. After this event, the young couple returned to Mrs. Lindsay's peaceful abode, where the happy trio all prosecute in different ways their zealous endeavours to do good, and conduce to their mutual enjoyment.

This little work is now drawn to a close; but if any desire exists to learn more of the family history, it may at a future time be gratified by the author, under the title of "Why should I be a Pastor?"

THE END.

17 Jan. 1853.

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